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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit for the study of Vietnam policy has the following goals: (1) student awareness and examination of alternatives to war; (2) student understanding of the process and elements involved in governmental decision making, including that of public opinion; (3) student understanding of their responsibilities and rights as citizens in a democracy; and (4) student responsibility for conducting the activities incorporated into the unit. The organization focus for each unit is a significant decision relating to involvement in Vietnam in each of the five presidential administrations from 1945-1972. The five decisions for analysis include the following: (1) France is permitted to reclaim its colonial empire in Indochina; (2) support of Ngo Dinh Diem in his rejection of national elections as provided in 1954 Geneva Accords; (3) the United States trains and sends military advisors to Vietnam; (4) introduction of combat troops into Vietnam and "Americanization" of the War; and (5) mining of Haiphong Harbor. Within the unit, separate chapters dealing with each decision all include: (1) a chronology of events; (2) a list of individuals involved in the decision and/or in related events of the period; (3) a historical and contextual narrative discussing the decision and any alternatives proposed at the time; (4) suggested student bibliography and a list of documents and other readings suggested for distribution to students (documents and other selections are compiled in Appendix A for reproduction); (5) a detailed selection of suggested student activities; and (6) supplementary teacher bibliography. Events of the time, as seen by key players and the media and appendices providing suggested student readings; a bibliography of items relating to peace and international conflict management; a list of critical thinking skills; and a list of films on Vietnam conclude the volume. (EH)

ED 385 484

FATEFUL DECISIONS 1945-1972:

THE UNITED STATES' VIETNAM POLICIES IN FIVE PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATIONS

A CURRICULUM GUIDE

by

LOUISE A. OLIVEIRA

and

NATALIE ROBINSON

SO 025 203

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The project Fateful Decisions 1945-1972 is sponsored by Women for a Non-Nuclear Future Education Fund and Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School and made possible by an Education Grant from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities.

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- Anne Landis and her students at Moses Brown School worked with the guide in its draft form, demonstrating that it can work well in the classroom and meet its objectives. Ms. Landis also worked with Natalie Robinson to develop the format and approach used in the curriculum.
- Women for a Non-Nuclear Future provided initial support for the project, and grant application development through its Education Fund. Its co-sponsorship of the project reflects its commitment to issue-oriented education.

The idea for this project originated with Natalie Robinson, who expresses heartfelt thanks to all those mentioned above and to the numerous others who helped her think it through to manageable form and encouraged her efforts to get it started. Particular recognition is owed to Louise A. Oliveira, who proposed the selection of the Vietnam War as the historical model to carry out the project idea, and without whose commitment the project could not have been completed.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM AND ITS USES

This curriculum unit is the result of a collaborative effort by Women for a Non-Nuclear Future Education Fund and the Social Studies Department of Exeter-West Greenwich Regional High School. Its development and dissemination have been made possible by an Education Grant from the Rhode Island Committee for the Humanities.

The unit's goals are:

- student awareness and examination of alternatives to war;
- student understanding of the process and elements involved in governmental decision making, including that of public opinion;
- student understanding of their responsibilities and rights as citizens in a democracy;
- student responsibility for conducting the activities incorporated into the unit.

The unit's structure is based on considering issues of war and peace by exploring alternatives to military solutions of conflicts among nations. Students will do this by examining historical decisions affecting participation by the United States in a particular war. The Vietnam War is being used for this purpose because it is sufficiently recent to be real to present-day students but far enough in the past to permit historical perspective. In addition, it is one of the telling events in the dismantling of European colonialism and it was deeply involved in the events of the Cold War.

In consultation with the project's humanities scholars, we identified from among many possibilities a significant decision relating to involvement by the United States in Vietnam in each of the five Presidential administrations during the years 1945-1972. Within the unit, separate chapters dealing with each decision all include:

- a chronology of events;
- a list of individuals involved in the decision and/or in related events of the period;
- a historical and contextual narrative discussing the decision and any alternatives proposed at the time;
- suggested student bibliography and a list of documents and other readings suggested for distribution to students (documents and other selections are compiled in Appendix A for reproduction);
- a detailed selection of suggested student activities;
- supplementary teacher bibliography.

Also included are biographical sketches of individuals referred to in the text and other participants in events of the time, a summary of Vietnamese history, and appendices providing various references and resources. This format is intended to provide teachers with the greatest possible flexibility in making use of the material. An individual teacher could, for example, work on a single decision, present a two- or three-week unit based on the material, or develop a quarter or semester course around it.

Although the material relates to the Vietnam War, the unit is not about the Vietnam War as an event in history. It is about the factors entering into a series of crucial decisions that ultimately embroiled the United States in a full-scale undeclared war and about the way in which each decision seemingly limited the range of possible alternatives in those that followed. It is intended to raise questions about the degree to which those limits were inescapable or could have been overcome, and the circum-stances under which they might have been overcome. By presenting a variety of material within the curriculum guide and by including considerable - although far from complete - detail, we hope to spare teachers the necessity of undertaking further research in order to integrate this project into their classes. We have assumed that for the most part it will be incorporated into ongoing courses in history or government by teachers already familiar with much of its content, although this is certainly not a prerequisite.

The Introductory Essay provides historical background referring back to World War II, the Korean War, and events leading up to the Geneva Conference of 1954. This essay and the narratives discussing each administrative decision emphasize the concerns that influenced successive administrations in the decision-making process and describe some of the intervening events linking one decision to another.

Examination of the crucial role of presidential advisers, frequently cited in narratives, raises significant issues about consideration of various alternatives throughout the five decisions. The five presidents differed in their personal approach to the advisory process, but civilian and military advisers alike based their recommendations on strategic and tactical assessments rather than on underlying issues of morality or ethics. Even dissenters such as George Ball and Mike Mansfield framed their objections in strategic terms. Planning a Tragedy, Larry Berman's detailed study of the Johnson administration's 1965 decision to employ combat troops in Vietnam and to "Americanize" the war, is worth consulting for its demonstration of this approach and for its insights into the increasing complexity of later decisions resulting from the effects of earlier ones.

It was left to the citizenry, and to a small minority in Congress, to raise the moral issues involved in entering and conducting war, as the country divided into Hawks and Doves over the worthiness of military action by the United States in Vietnam. Because consideration of these issues is germane to the unit's goals, the guide includes an essay exploring them by Professor Sheri Smith of the Rhode Island College Department of Philosophy. Students should be made familiar with the essay and should consider its points in their formulation of alternatives to the five decisions. A separate bibliography of items excerpted from the United States Institute of Peace Bibliography on Peace, Security and International Conflict Management is provided in Appendix B to permit further development of these issues.

The narratives, chronologies and the summary of Vietnamese history have been prepared for use as teacher resource material, but they can be used by students as well either in their original form or as adapted by teachers to reflect the needs and skill levels of their students. The unit is not intended for use exclusively with advanced students in spite of its heavy reliance on reading, writing and critical analysis. Teachers are encouraged to adapt reading selections or select substitutes; to adjust the extent and nature of writing assignments; and to make use of cooperative learning and class discussion to apply this topic across the range of student skill levels. Teachers are also encouraged to use the suggested activities selectively, adapting them to their own students' needs and interests, or providing substitute activities accomplishing the same learning and discussion opportunities. Reliance upon student preparation and presentation of material through reading and research assignments and classroom activities is central to the design and goals of this project.

The curriculum should also be used to help students become aware of their own rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy, especially the need to be properly informed in order to guard the rights and carry out the responsibilities. Issues of dissent or support for governmental policies, and the role of dissent in a democracy, should also be explored within this context.

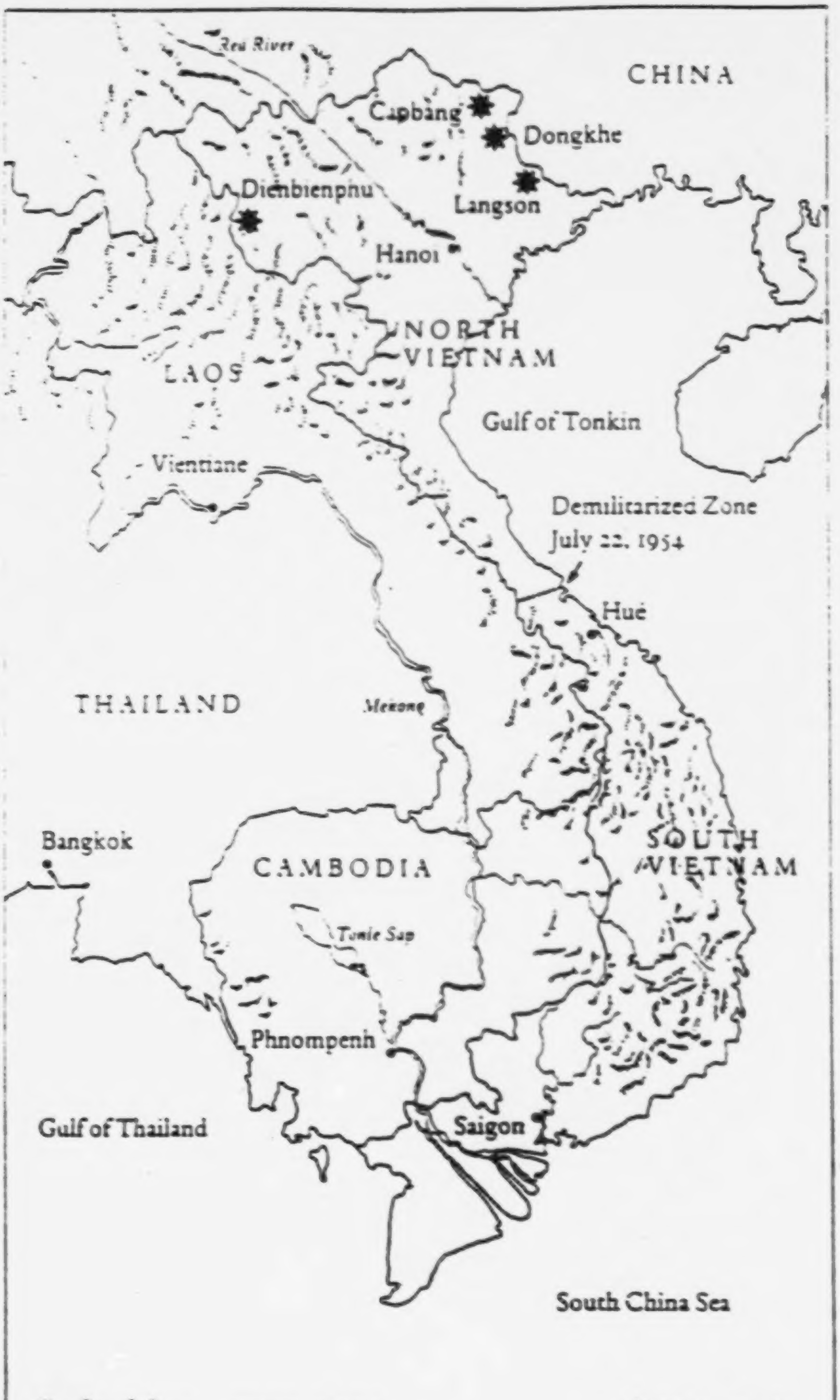
In considering alternatives to the five decisions in this curriculum unit, students should not necessarily limit themselves to those proposed at the time, but attempt to develop others based on their own ideas, basing them on criteria or principles that they believe right. A list of such criteria could include those of:

- democracy, based on national self-determination and popularly-elected government;
- non-intervention, leaving other nations to work out their own solutions and refraining from attempting to influence their policies or forms of government;
- human and individual rights, calling for international codes of conduct, and renouncing force as a means of imposing political solutions;
- world power, promoting leadership by the United States in issues of international economics and politics, and exercising power and prestige by the United States to influence or control decisions of international scope;
- justice, relying on international law and world courts to penalize guilt and indemnify victims;
- negotiation, seeking an impartial forum or international body, such as the United Nations, to resolve issues among contending interests;
- paternalism, based on the contention that some countries are as yet unready for self-government and should be prepared for it under the administration of more advanced nations.

Rapid and often startling developments from the Middle East to Eastern Europe mark the final decade of the twentieth century. Decisions are being made that will shape the lives of today's high school students in their young adulthood as the twenty-first century begins. Many of these decisions relate to the wisdom, morality and effectiveness of using United

States military power to influence events in other parts of the world. Current world events offer teachers both challenges and opportunities to raise student awareness of the wider world and the patterns of conflict that have plagued it. We hope that the material and activities in this curriculum will provide tools that will be of use in helping students bring a sense of historical perspective to the understanding of today's fateful decisions.

We would appreciate receiving comments from teachers as to the uses they have made of this material and their assessment of the project and the guide. It would be particularly interesting to learn of any ideas of their own that teachers have developed and used based upon their examination of this curriculum. Comments may be addressed to Natalie Robinson, 142 Eighth Street, Providence, RI 02906.


Red River
CHINA
Caobang
Dongkhe
Dienbienphu
Langson
Hanoi
NORTH VIETNAM
LAOS
Gulf of Tonkin
Vientiane
Demilitarized Zone
July 22, 1954
Hue
THAILAND
Mekong
Bangkok
CAMBODIA
Tonle Sap
SOUTH VIETNAM
Phnompenh
Gulf of Thailand
Saigon
South China Sea
✸ Major Battles

Indochina 1953-1954

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF VIETNAMESE HISTORY

This summary is based on Unit 1, "Introduction to Vietnam: Land, History and Culture" in The Lessons of the Vietnam War, a modular textbook produced by the Center for Social Studies Education; and on Chapter 3, "The Heritage of Vietnamese Nationalism" in the 1983 edition of Vietnam A History, by Stanley Karnow.

Modern Vietnam is an S-shaped country, 1,000 miles from north to south, stretched along the coast of the southeast Asian mainland from China on the north to the Gulf of Thailand on the south. Its eastern boundary is the South China Sea and its western border the Truong Son, or Central Mountains. Laos and Cambodia lie directly beyond the Truong Son. Except for widening areas in the north and south, Vietnam is extremely narrow along its entire length, often less than 100 miles from east to west. The climate is tropical, with dense jungles, swamps and lush rice paddies. Average temperatures are in the eighties and nineties Fahrenheit, rarely falling below fifty degrees except in the far north. Two thirds of the approximately 60,000,000 Vietnamese live in the major rice-producing river delta areas - the Red River Valley in the north and the Mekong River Delta in the south.

During the first millenium B.C., Vietnam developed as a small independent rice-growing and local commercial area in the lower Red River Valley. The Viets were people of Mongolian origin who had migrated south. This principality was conquered by the Chinese in the second century B.C. and remained under Chinese control for the next thousand years in spite of Vietnamese resistance and periodic rebellions. Two early insurrections were both led by women. One succeeded in establishing an independent state for two years before Chinese reconquest. In the tenth century A.D., another successful insurrection, in which peasants united with the nobility to defeat the Chinese, established an independent kingdom recognized as such by the Chinese in exchange for an arrangement under which the Vietnamese paid tribute to China. This relationship lasted for many centuries, but even then Vietnam was not peaceful. It endured successive Mongol invasions led by the Emperor Kublai Khan, repelling them all. The last one was defeated in 1287.

After the final Mongol defeat, the Vietnamese themselves became imperialists, conquering Champa, a kingdom in central Vietnam. Weakened by their military campaigns and with their defensive resources stretched thin by the expanded territory under their supervision, the Vietnamese were once more conquered and briefly occupied by the Chinese.

During the thousand-year period of Chinese control, the conquerors had imposed Chinese civilization on the Vietnamese. This highly-advanced civilization left a lasting effect on Vietnamese culture, introducing Chinese political and social institutions and basing education on concepts of Confucianism. Confucian philosophy emphasized the importance of family and community over individual interests. It also used a merit system based on examination to select civil servants, rather than limiting service to members of a landed aristocracy.

Although the system included a rigid hierarchy of power and, as a highly-centralized state, gave the emperor primary authority, it bounded the ruler's behavior within a set of principles called the Tao, or Way. These principles required concern for the people's needs. Confucianism also provided an opportunity for peasant children to rise through education and merit to influential positions in Vietnamese society. These privileges did not apply to girls, whose place was assumed to be in the home. Educated Vietnamese spoke Chinese and were imbued with Chinese culture, but the Vietnamese always held to their sense of themselves as a separate people. Their great folk heroes were the leaders of the periodic uprising against the Chinese. One of those leaders, Le Loi, became Vietnam's greatest emperor when he banished the Chinese for the final time in 1426 and established his capital at Hanoi.

Le Loi and his successors continued to model Vietnamese society along Confucian lines, setting up structures in the 15th century that served the country for 400 years until the French conquered Vietnam and introduced their systems. Confucianism was not entirely benign, however, and the Vietnamese emperors were not always secure upon their thrones. The Confucian code of laws provided severe penalties for any crimes that threatened order or stability. Disobedience to a teacher or an official could result in banishment, and strangulation was one of several prescribed penalties for treason or rebellion. It was, in fact, preferred by the convicted over decapitation or slow dismemberment because it left the body intact to join the spirit in the afterlife. Banishment was considered a harsh punishment because an exile could not worship at the graves of his ancestors. The emperors had reason to fear instability, as court intrigues, regional revolts and other uprisings were frequent. From the early 16th century on, competing family clans engaged in constant power struggles. The Trinh and Nguyen families fought each other for two centuries, ultimately agreeing to a truce and partitioning the country much as the 20th century Geneva Accords were to do. Both sides planned to use the truce as a period in which to regain strength to fight again. At the end of the 18th century, the leader of the Nguyen faction turned to the French for support, opening the way for French intervention and colonization.

During all this time the majority of the Vietnamese, 80% of whom were peasants and rice farmers, lived in an unchanging rhythm in the thousands of villages and hamlets throughout the country. Their lives were encompassed by their identity with their village, and spent frequently in the homes and on the land their forefathers had tended. All decisions affecting them were made either within the family or by the council of village elders. The central government and its power were distant, in keeping with the famous Vietnamese saying "The authority of the emperor stops at the village gate." The villages had to pay taxes and supply recruits for military service, but individual tax rates were set by the village elders, who passed the collection on to district chiefs, who in turn dealt with the central government. Thus, while the Vietnamese respected a strong government for its ability to provide security, efficiency and social justice, their political concerns were locally based and they did not develop a strong sense of political participation.

The Vietnamese system did not lead to a strong sense of individualism or freedom of choice as practiced in the west. Family and society were highly patriarchal with obedience of children to parents and wives to husbands emphasized. Families remained together, often with three generations under one roof. Sons remained on the ancestral land to provide for the needs of the elders.

Peasant life was hard, and the land available to a family often inadequate. Rice cultivation is highly labor intensive. Farmers raised large families to work on their land, increasing the population in the rice-growing areas, but also increasing the suffering of hunger and starvation when the harvest was poor or natural disasters damaged crops.

Since ethnic Vietnamese are approximately 90% of the country's population, it is one of the most homogeneous societies in Southeast Asia, contributing to a strong sense of national identity. However, there are major geographic and religious divisions among the Vietnamese themselves, reflected in Vietnam's history of strife and colonial domination.

Geographic differences arose as a result of Vietnamese expansion southward after the 10th century. Southern Vietnam developed more of a frontier-style culture, less bound by traditional Vietnamese ways. The southern Vietnamese were more influenced by French institutions and culture during the colonial period of the 19th and 20th centuries. Religious differences pit the majority of the Vietnamese, who are Buddhist, against a minority of about 3,000,000 Catholics, whose ancestors were converted by French missionaries. The Catholics, educated in Western ideas, were primary wartime supporters of the Saigon regime in South Vietnam. There are also two major religious sects in Vietnam, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, with about a million adherents between them. The sects are actively political and have opposed both the South and North Vietnamese governments.

Beginning in the 16th century, European explorers, merchant adventurers and missionaries followed newly-discovered routes to the East in search of trade, territory and Christian converts. The Vietnamese at first allowed European trade but soon became suspicious of European political goals and rejected it. A group of French missionaries remained in Vietnam after other Europeans had gone, serving the religious needs of several hundred thousand converts to Catholicism. In 1802, Nguyen Anh united the country, calling on French assistance to gain national power. Even so, the new emperor resisted French influence. He tried to drive the French, including the missionaries, out of the country. But the French, seeking to compete for Asian territory and commerce with Great Britain, Germany, Holland and the United States, tried to establish a base in Vietnam by force. In repeated attempts, and after initial failures, France took over Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos by the end of the 19th century. The entire region was then organized into a single administrative unit called the Indochina Union, under a French Governor-General appointed from Paris.

The French justified their actions by asserting that they had a "mission civilisatrice" or civilizing mission toward the "backward" societies of Asia. In fact, as in all the western countries, they wanted political domination and economic profit in an age when European countries measured their prestige and power in terms of global empire. The United States, a junior partner in global expansion during its 19th century westward march across the North American continent, joined the competition by seizing Cuba and the Philippines from Spain at the end of the century.

The French claimed that their administrative goals were increased political rights and ultimate liberation on a democratic western model when the people were ready to assume responsibility. They did introduce institutions of representative government, but with severe limits that kept power within the hands of French residents and a few wealthy Vietnamese. They also exploited the area economically, applying laws and policies that profited them in agriculture, trade and manufacturing at the expense of the local population. Land holdings also became more concentrated, and many peasants had to rent additional land to survive. This process predated the French arrival and contributed to the harshness of peasant life. Ironically, French colonial policies promoted Vietnamese nationalism within a population that had previously been more divided among itself by factional and religious competition than united through its ethnic identity. Several nineteenth century insurgent movements against the French were led by Buddhist monks. Other guerilla and partisan efforts were organized by military mandarins. But the French managed to subdue these uprisings, "pacifying" Indochina by the 20th century in a series of brutal retaliations and executions. Although the French promoted an appearance of governing through native Vietnamese, they ruled directly for all practical purposes.

In the 20th century, a generation of Vietnamese born under French rule took over the cause of Vietnamese independence. They were familiar with Western institutions introduced into their country by the French and educated in Western civilization. Some had traveled abroad. They wanted to restore Vietnamese independence within a modern state rather than returning to the Confucian past. During the 1920s this educated class of students, journalists, teachers, government workers and small merchants began to organize to seek political and social reform and to rid their country of French rule. They emphasized Western concepts such as individual freedom, political and economic equality, and women's rights. But these rebels and reformers did not understand the problems and hopes of the workers and peasants who were the majority of the population. Their political program concentrated on freedom of speech and increased native representation in legislatures, ignoring land reform, working conditions, and the high rents and taxes that burdened Vietnamese farmers. It was left to Ho Chi Minh to bring his revolutionary skills and commitment to the people in a way that united workers, peasants and intellectuals in an unremitting 30-year struggle for independent nationhood.

Ho Chi Minh was born in Central Vietnam in 1890. His father was a Vietnamese official who resigned from the imperial bureaucracy in protest against French rule. He was also a close friend of several of the patriots who organized to oppose it. From his childhood, Ho was familiar with tales of ancient and modern Vietnamese heroes who fought against the nation's enemies. After several years of education at the imperial school in Hue, the nation's capital, Ho went south and taught briefly in a village school.

In 1911 he left Vietnam as a cook's helper on a French freighter, traveling around the world and ultimately arriving in Paris at the end of World War I.

At the time, the allied leaders were meeting in Versailles to dictate peace terms to the Germans. Ho became known to Vietnamese exile circles in France by submitting a petition to the allied conference asking that the principle of self-determination, one of Woodrow Wilson's 14 points, be applied to Indochina to gain Vietnamese freedom from French rule. Remaining in Paris, Ho became increasingly active in radical circles. He was a founding member of the French Communist Party in 1920. His effectiveness as a publicist and organizer caught the attention of the Communist International, which invited him to Moscow in 1923 to train as an agent. In 1924 he was sent to South China, officially as a member of a mission to the government of Sun Yat Sen, but in reality to organize an Indochinese revolutionary movement.

Ho created an organization called the Revolutionary Youth League among patriotic young Vietnamese exiles in South China. By the end of 1929, the League had over 1,000 members and had become one of the most effective anti-colonial parties in Indochina. Much credit for its success was due to Ho's qualities as a leader and his appeal to the needs and aspirations of poor peasants and workers. In 1930, Ho transformed the League into an official Indochinese Communist Party which supported a major revolt among starving workers and peasants suffering from the worldwide effects of the Great Depression. The French put down the revolt, arresting most of the Communist leaders and executing many of them. Ho himself was briefly imprisoned in British Hong Kong at this time.

The Indochinese Communist Party revived in the late 1930s as part of a general move toward Communist cooperation with non-Communist parties and governments that opposed Fascism. The French became more tolerant of the Indochinese Communists when the French Communists supported the government in Paris. But when the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939, France outlawed the Communist Party and its Vietnamese leaders fled to the hills for survival.

World War II proved to be a decisive event for Vietnamese Communism. In 1940, Japan demanded the right to station troops in French Indochina and use the area's natural resources. After a brief refusal, France struck a bargain with Japan, agreeing to the occupation in return for Japanese recognition of French sovereignty in the region. But French authority in Indochina was weakened by Hitler's defeat of France in Europe as well as by the Japanese occupation.

During the 1940s, the Indochinese Communists began to organize a revolution to seize power at the end of the war. Ho Chi Minh returned to South China after several years in the Soviet Union and, in early 1941, crossed the border into Vietnam, his first return in thirty years. In a cave near Pac Bo, a village in the northern hills, Ho met his comrades who had been working within the country while he had organized for independence from without it. Among those confederates were Pham Van Dong and Vo Nguyen Giap, who called Ho "Uncle". He was the respected elder, to whom they were respectful in the old Confucian spirit, but familiar in the new democratic modern style. He told them it was time for a new independence movement uniting "patriots of all ages and types, peasants, workers, merchants and soldiers" to fight both the Japanese and the French. The new movement set up a political organization called the Vietnam Independence League, or Vietminh. Although led by the Communist Party, its program of national independence and moderate political and economic reform won it the support of many non-communist patriotic Vietnamese. The Party and the League worked throughout the war toward its planned uprising, organizing politically throughout the country and preparing guerilla forces in the mountains of North Vietnam. The Vietminh cause was advanced by the chaos resulting from a Japanese seizure of power in Indochina from the French in 1945. When famine struck that same year, only the Vietminh came to the aid of the starving. They were now recognized as leaders in the fight for Vietnamese national independence and social justice. Immediately after the Japanese surrender on August 14, Ho Chi Minh called for a general uprising against the Japanese troops in Indochina. The guerillas seized villages and established a rural administration. They also seized key urban installations.

In early September, in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh declared the formation of a provisional Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) with himself as President. Although the communists were the dominant group in the government, it included representation of non-communist parties. But the French did not accept the loss of their most important Asian colony and sought to regain it, setting in motion the train of events referred to in Fateful Decision #1 and in the Introductory Essay.

Even this brief overview of Vietnamese history reveals several elements that can be applied to evaluation of the five decisions comprising this unit. First, there is the persistence of national identity and resistance to outside invaders in spite of regional and internal differences among the Vietnamese. Second, there is the long history of Confucian culture with its emphasis on family and community, its traditions of hierarchy and obedience, and its elements of ancestor worship. This is combined with the attachment to place typical of rural Vietnamese, whose lives and loyalties are defined by their ancestral villages. There is also the attachment to a cultural history based on revered heroes of the past. In addition, there is the mingling of the traditional ways of the villages and the modern concepts embraced by the urban, educated Vietnamese who became revolutionary leaders in the 1920s and 1930s.

Modern Vietnamese leaders, such as Ho Chi Minh, adopted Western political and social concepts while still understanding and making use of traditional Vietnamese localism and family-centered institutions. The Western countries that attempted to control or mold Vietnam in keeping with their own interests contributed to their own defeat by their misunderstanding of the Vietnamese people, their ignorance of Vietnamese history, and their failure to recognize the depth and validity of the Vietnamese people's dedication to the goal of national independence. The United States, in particular, refused to understand the gulf between its anointed leaders, such as Ngo Dinh Diem, and the vast majority of ordinary Vietnamese. These and other misunderstandings play a role in all of the ensuing decisions proposed for consideration in this unit - decisions that escalated involvement by the United States into a war that was not sought by the Vietnamese and was never officially declared by the United States.

SELECTED BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Note: Adapted from Karnow's, Vietnam A History, and supplemented as needed. Numbers in parentheses refer to decisions in which reference to the individual is significant or helpful.

VIETNAMESE

Bao Dai (1,2): South Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States from 1966-72, and envoy for President Nguyen Van Thieu.

Duong Van Minh (2,4): Nicknamed "Big Minh". Trained by the French, he became the senior army officer in Diem's 1955 government. Led the coup against Diem in November 1963, but lost power two months later. Became head of state again in April 1975 and then surrendered government to the communists. Emigrated to France in 1983.

Ho Chi Minh (1,2,3,4): Born as Nguyen Tat Than in central Vietnam in 1890. He moved to Paris in 1917 and remained there for seven years during which time he joined the French Community Party. Founded the Indochinese Communist Party in Hong Kong in 1930, but did not return to Vietnam until 1941. There he created the Vietminh and adopted the name Ho Chi Minh, meaning "He Who Enlightens". He proclaimed Vietnam's independence from France in 1945, quoting words from the Declaration of Independence and with OSS officer, Archimedes Patti, in attendance. He fought the French for nine years until the final victory at Dien Bien Phu. He was President of North Vietnam from 1945 until his death in 1969.

Le Duan (1,2): Born in 1908 in Quangtri Province, Le Duan worked first as a railroad worker but soon became a professional revolutionary. By 1959, he was the Secretary-General of the Lao Dong Party. Later he succeeded Ho Chi Minh as the most powerful figure in Vietnam. He used the alias, Ba, meaning "second son" in deference to Ho.

Le Duc Tho (1,2,5): Born in 1912 in northern Vietnam, Le Duc Tho was a founding member of the Indochinese Communist Party and played an important part in determining its structure. He directed the insurgency in the south during the 1970s while negotiating with Henry Kissinger. He rejected his share of the Nobel Peace Prize that he was awarded jointly with Kissinger for the January 1973 cease-fire agreement.

Ngo Dinh Diem (2,3): Born and raised as a Catholic in northern Vietnam, Diem was thought to be the fierce anti-communist leader that the Buddhist south needed as President. Diem returned to Vietnam from exile in the United States to become Bao Dai's Prime Minister. Diem later defeated Bao Dai in a rigged referendum in 1955. He rejected the unifying elections as dictated by the Geneva Accords. He was overthrown and murdered by his own generals in November 1963.

Ngo Dinh Nhu (3): Diem's younger brother and chief political advisor. He organized the government's secret policy, the Can Lao. He was assassinated along with his brother.

Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu (3): Diem's sister-in-law, born of a Frenchified family in Hanoi. Became the unofficial First Lady of South Vietnam. Her radical views, especially terming the self-immolation of Buddhist monks a "monk barbecue", caused much protest at home and abroad. She left South Vietnam after the Diem assassination and made her home in Rome.

Nguyen Cao Ky (4): Originally a South Vietnamese air force pilot and officer, Ky became Prime Minister of South Vietnam from 1965-67 and its figurehead President until 1971, when replaced by Nguyen Van Thieu.

Nguyen Khanh (4): South Vietnamese General who overthrew the military regime that had deposed Diem. Took position of Prime Minister in 1964, but was ousted within a year.

Nguyen Van Thieu (3,5): Served briefly in the Vietminh before joining the French-created Vietnamese army. He was trained in France and in the United States and became President of South Vietnam in 1967. He was unable to rule effectively after 1973 and fled Vietnam in April 1975, just before the fall of Saigon.

Pham Van Dong (5): As a student in Hanoi, Pham became involved in national politics, fled to China where he met Ho Chi Minh and became one of the founders of the Indochinese Communist Party. He was a skilled diplomat who led the Vietminh delegation to the 1954 Geneva Conference. He was Ho's Prime Minister from 1950 onward and retained that post after the reunification of Vietnam in 1975.

Tran Kim Tuyen (2,3): A North Vietnamese Catholic and doctor. He left North Vietnam in 1954 to become the head of Ngo Dinh Nhu's secret police. He later plotted the overthrow of Diem's government but was exiled before he could participate. Escaped to Britain in 1975.

Tri Quang (3): Buddhist monk who organized resistance to the South Vietnamese government in 1963 and again in 1966. Was also put under house arrest when the communists came in 1975.

Troung Chinh (1): Born in 1908; became one of the founders of the Indochinese Communist Party. He was held responsible for the excesses that took place during land reform in North Vietnam, but after a period of dishonor, returned as a major communist figure.

Vo Nguyen Giap (5): Foremost military figure in North Vietnam. He taught high school and studied law at the University of Hanoi while engaging in communist activities. He created the Vietminh military organization that defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu and later led the military against the Americans. Almost completely retired from public life after 1975.

Xuan Thuy (4,5): Foreign minister of North Vietnam, 1963-65; headed the delegation at Paris Peace Talks in 1968; negotiated with Kissinger as Le Duc Tho's deputy.

FRENCH

Georges Bidault (1,2): French Foreign Minister at the time of the 1954 Geneva Convention. Took a tough position toward the Vietminh, but resigned when his government fell. Office was taken over by Mendes-France.

Emile Bollaert (1,2): High Commissioner for Indochina, March 1947-October 1948. Was a civil servant with practically no foreign policy experience. Was more concerned with French domestic politics than international affairs.

Leon Blum (1,2): Socialist Prime Minister during the 1930s and again after World War II. Initially sympathetic to Vietnamese nationalist cause, but changed under pressure from party conservatives.

Jean Cedile (1): Member of General Charles De Gaulle's Free French Forces who was parachuted into southern Vietnam in August 1945 to negotiate with the Vietminh. He became a partisan of a strong French presence in Indochina.

Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu (1): French High Commissioner to Indochina after World War II. Was a Carmelite monk and naval officer who became an Admiral. He attempted to derail an agreement between the French and the Vietminh.

Charles De Gaulle (1,2): French General, leader of the Free French during World War II. President of the Fifth French Republic 1958-1969.

Pierre Mendes-France (2): Political figure who warned against French involvement in Indochina. Was elected Prime Minister in June 1954 while the Geneva Conference was ongoing. He set a deadline to reach an armistice with the Vietminh. He was ousted from office soon after the Accords were negotiated.

Jacques Philippe LeClerc (1): Alias of Philippe de Hautecloque, a military officer who led the armored division that liberated Paris from the Germans in 1944. A year later, as a commander in Indochina, he defeated the Vietminh in southern Vietnam but recognized the need for a negotiated settlement.

Leon Pignon (1,2): High Commissioner for Indochina, 1948-50. Had been an advisor to d'Argenlieu and strongly opposed any compromise with the Vietminh.

Jean Sainteny (1): At one time a banker in Hanoi, was sent to Vietnam in 1945 to negotiate on behalf of France with Ho Chi Minh, who became his friend. Arranged the secret talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.

Etienne Valluy (1,2): Succeeded LeClerc in 1946 as Commander in Indochina. Issued orders to attack the Vietminh only five weeks after France had negotiated an agreement with Ho Chi Minh.

AMERICANS

Dean Acheson (2,4): Secretary of State, 1949-52. First persuaded Truman to aid the French in Indochina. Later, urged Johnson to stop escalation and end the war. Died in 1971.

Spiro Agnew (5): Vice President, 1968-1973. Resigned in October 1973 after indictment for tax evasion. During his tenure denounced war protestors in "vitriolic terms".

George Ball (4): Senior State Department official during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Consistently argued against a deeper involvement in Vietnam.

Chester Bowles (3): Critic of American involvement to Vietnam. Was removed as Under Secretary of State in 1963 by Kennedy. During the Nixon administration he conducted a mission to Cambodia to repair relations with Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

McGeorge Bundy (3,4): Head of National Security Council staff in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. One of the "wise men" who urged Johnson to de-escalate the war in 1968.

William Bundy (3): Brother of McGeorge. Was with the CIA for ten years until joining the Kennedy administration's Defense Department. Was Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs during the Johnson administration. He was instrumental in determining Far Eastern Policy.

Ellsworth Bunker (5): American Ambassador to Saigon, 1967-73.

Frank Church (4): Senator from Idaho, 1957-81. Chairman of Foreign Relations Committee, 1975-81. His criticism of American involvement in Vietnam angered Johnson.

Lucien Conein (1,3): French-born CIA agent who served as liaison between Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge and the South Vietnamese generals who overthrew Diem in 1963. Previously served in Vietnam with the OSS at the end of World War II.

A. Peter Dewey (1): Lt. Colonel in the OSS, assigned to Saigon in 1945; accidentally killed by the Vietminh in September, the first American to die in Vietnam.

John Foster Dulles (2): Secretary of State, 1953-59, and strong anti-communist who favored full support of the French in Indochina. Failed to dissuade them from compromising with the Vietminh at 1954 Geneva Conference.

Eldridge Durbrow (2): Ambassador to South Vietnam, 1957-61; outwardly voiced confidence in Ngo Dinh Diem, but privately warned of his government's ineffectiveness.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (2): U.S. President, 1953-61. Decided against aiding the French at Dien Bien Phu, but provided economic aid. Declared support for Diem in 1955. As he left office he considered Laos a more threatening potential for crisis than Vietnam.

Gerald Ford (5): Agnew's replacement as Vice President in 1973, later became the first unelected American President after Nixon's resignation in 1974.

J. William Fulbright (3,4): Senator from Arkansas, 1945-79. Was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and organized Senate passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Later turned against the war and held hearings on it.

Paul Harkins (3): General in charge of military advisory mission to South Vietnam in 1963; opposed the coup against Diem. Was known for expecting optimistic reports from his officers.

W. Averell Harriman (3,4): Served as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern affairs, 1961-63, and was instrumental in authorizing American support for the overthrow of Diem. Headed delegation to Paris Peace Talks in 1968.

Roger Hilsman (3): Harriman's successor as Assistant Secretary of State. Advocated counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Promoted the coup against Diem. Resigned from government soon after Johnson became President.

Lyndon B. Johnson (3,4): United States Senator from Texas, 1949-1961; Vice President 1961-November 1963; President November 1963-January 1969. Presided over the major escalation of the Vietnam War. Did not run for re-election in 1968. Died in 1973.

George Kennan (1): Father of the "containment theory", which he later said was misapplied to situations such as Vietnam.

John F. Kennedy (3): United States President 1960-1963. Committed growing numbers of military advisors to Vietnam.

Robert Kennedy (3,4): Attorney General during the Kennedy administration. Ran for Democratic nomination for President on an antiwar platform against Johnson in 1968. He was assassinated in June 1968.

Henry Kissinger (5): Nixon's National Security Advisor; negotiated with Le Duc Tho until the Paris Peace Agreement was concluded in January 1973. Later appointed Secretary of State by Nixon, retaining this position during the Ford administration.

Melvin Laird (4,5): Nixon's Secretary of Defense, 1969-72. Strongly supported American troop withdrawal from Vietnam. Invented the term Vietnamization.

Edward Lansdale (4): Air Force officer during World War II. At the CIA's direction, he served as an advisor to Diem in 1955. Returned to Vietnam in 1966 as a Special Assistant to Ambassadors Henry Cabot Lodge and Ellsworth Bunker.

Henry Cabot Lodge (3): Among government positions held were Senator from Massachusetts and U.N. Ambassador during the Eisenhower administration. Was named as United States Ambassador to South Vietnam on two different occasions: 1963-64; 1965-67. Played an important role in the overthrow of Diem's regime.

Mike Mansfield (2,3,4): Senator from Montana, 1952-76; early Diem supporter who turned against the war.

Robert McNamara (3,4): Secretary of Defense, 1961-68, and a senior policymaker for the Vietnam War. Resigned government position in 1968 after growing disenchantment with the war.

Wayne Morse (4): Senator from Oregon, 1945-69. Was an early, almost single-handed opponent of the Vietnam War. He and Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska alone voted against the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964.

Richard M. Nixon (5): Elected to Congress after World War II. Served as Vice President during the Eisenhower administration. Won Presidential elections in 1968 and 1972, but was forced to resign because of the Watergate scandal.

Frederick Nolting (3): Appointed by Kennedy as United States Ambassador to South Vietnam in 1961. Upset by the United States complicity in Diem's overthrow, he resigned his position.

Charlton Ogburn (1): State Department official who warned against United States involvement in Southeast Asia during the period of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Archimedes Patti (1): OSS Officer during World War II who was assigned to assist Ho Chi Minh's guerillas fight the Japanese. Spent several months with Ho in Hanoi in late 1945 and helped him to draft the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence.

General Matthew Ridgway (2): General and Chief of Staff of the Army during Eisenhower administration. Strongly opposed American involvement in Vietnam. Experience from Korean War convinced him that America could not conduct a land war in Asia.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1): First and only United States four-term President until his death in 1945. Opposed return of France to Indochina after World War II but deferred to Winston Churchill, who objected to FDR's proposal of establishing trusteeships in European colonies as a step toward independence.

Walt W. Rostow (3,4): Top State Department official during Kennedy's administration. Was also Johnson's National Security Advisor, 1966-68. Promoted a strong military response in Vietnam.

Dean Rusk (3,4): Secretary of State during both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. Devoted more years to Vietnam than any other senior American official with involvement starting in 1950 as Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern affairs. Promoted strong American involvement.

Walter Bedell Smith (2): General who served as Under Secretary of State, 1953-54; in that capacity headed the American delegation at 1954 Geneva Conference.

Maxwell Taylor (3,4): Kennedy's favorite General; Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1962-64. Ambassador to South Vietnam, 1964-65.

Harry S. Truman (1): United States President, 1945-52. Was the first President to involve the United States in Vietnam through aid given to the French in 1949. His Truman Doctrine was an early application of the containment policy.

Cyrus Vance (3,4): Deputy Secrety of Defense under Robert McNamara, 1964-67. Was Harriman's chief associate at the Paris Peace Talks in 1968. Favored diplomatic relations with the communist regime in Vietnam.

William Westmoreland (4): Head of the military advisory mission to Vietnam in 1964. Appointed by Johnson. Until 1968, commanded United States combat forces in Vietnam. Later became Chief of Staff of the Army.

Earle Wheeler (4): Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1964-70, and principal military figure in Washington overseeing the Vietnam War.

OTHERS

Anthony Eden (2): British Foreign Secretary who served with Vyascheslav Molotov as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference of 1954. Instrumental in persuading Prime Minister Winston Churchill to reject Eisenhower's suggestion for joint intervention to help the French at Dien Bien Phu.

Douglas Gracey (1): Commander-in-Charge of the British force that entered Saigon in September 1945 to disarm the Japanese. He released and armed interned French troops against orders, leading to renewed clashes between the French and the Vietnamese.

Aleksei Kosygin (4): Soviet Prime Minister from 1964 until his death in 1980. He traveled to Hanoi in February 1965 in an attempt to persuade the North Vietnamese to negotiate with the United States, a visit that was aborted when American bombing of the North began.

Mao Zedong (5): Chinese Communist Party Chairman; first warned North Vietnamese against negotiating with the United States, then invited Nixon to Beijing in February 1972.

Vyacheslav Molotov (2): Co-chairman with Eden of the 1954 Geneva Conference. Delivered verdict that compelled Vietnamese communists to settle for less than their objectives; agreed to cancel Vietnamese elections two years later, again disappointing the Hanoi leaders.

Souvanna Phouma (4): Prince who was made Prime Minister of Laos in 1962, following a conference at Geneva; held the post until the communist take-over in 1975.

Norodom Sihanouk (1,4): Became French-sanctioned King of Cambodia in 1941; later abdicated; tried to maintain neutrality of Cambodia but was overthrown on a trip to France in 1970. Later lived in China and North Korea and most recently has attempted to negotiate a coalition government in Cambodia.

Josef Stalin (1): Leader of the Soviet Union through World War II. Member of the "Big Three" allied powers against Nazi alliance. Concerns about the post-war intent of the Soviet Union in dominating eastern Europe helped generate the Cold War and the containment policy.

Zhou Enlai (2,5): As China's Foreign Minister, reached compromise in Geneva in 1954 with Mendes-France that ended the French War in Indochina; arranged Nixon's trip to China in 1972. Both events earned him the wrath of the North Vietnamese, who felt betrayed by China.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

> Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. George Santayana, The Life of Reason.

> ...at the root of many of the large and small deceptions that characterized America's Vietnam policy over the years, there was that most fatal flaw of all - namely, collective self-deception. And given that flaw, there was no way to face and tell the truth that we had, after all, no real stake or national interest there, had made a bad mistake, and should simply get out.
> Harrison E. Salisbury, Vietnam Reconsidered

The debate over Vietnam continued long after the last Americans left Saigon. While many Americans tried to forget it in their revulsion at its excesses and their sense of failure at its outcome, historians and journalists analyzed its errors. Its policies have been condemned and re-examined as the "me" decade of the 1970s blended into the "greed" decade of the 1980s. Its echoes reverberated in Granada and in the Persian Gulf. As Eastern European communism collapsed in the unfolding 1990s, some political commentators argued that this apparent "victory for the free world" demonstrated the validity of forty years of United States global anti-communism, including the Vietnam War.

The conduct of that war was frequently based on misperceptions that molded both United States foreign policy and American public opinion. National leaders throughout the period considered in this unit acted on the assumption that world problems and threats to postwar stability could be countered by exporting American political and social values along with American financial and military aid. The persistence of this assumption led to what Harrison Salisbury has labeled collective self-deception.(1) The importance of taking cultural context into account in foreign policy decision-making was forgotten, if indeed it had ever been learned during hundreds of years of "white man's burden" colonialism. Although the United States has never been a major colonizing nation, it was the ally in two world wars of European powers that were, and participated in the treaty-making that set the stage for postwar upheavals in both instances.

To understand the course of action followed by the United States in Vietnam, therefore, we must refer back to the conflict in the Pacific during World War II and to the postwar events leading up to the United Nations "police action" in Korea from 1950 to 1953. In an even wider sense, the dismantling of the German colonial empire after its defeat in World War I and the similar break-up of the Japanese empire after World War II accelerated the momentum of anti-colonial struggles and national liberation movements throughout Africa and Asia that had been simmering for most of the twentieth century. Underpinning these growing worldwide movements were the successes of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in the chaotic aftermath of World War I and the Chinese Communist revolution after World War II. Neither England nor France, although victorious in World War II, were able to reclaim peacefully their dominion over their prewar empires. While England ultimately negotiated in India and retreated from its mandate in Palestine, France fought in Indochina.

Cause and effect relationships in history are most frequently discerned in retrospect. It is not surprising, therefore, that in July 1941, few, if any, Americans anticipated a future large-scale United States involvement in Indochina. But during that month, Japan launched an incursion into the area, and the United States responded by freezing Japanese assets in the United States. This action, followed by the same measures in Great Britain and the Netherlands, cutting off Japan's source of credit along with its necessary imports of rubber, scrap iron and fuel oil, led the Japanese warlords to their decision to attack Pearl Harbor and enter into war with the United States. "Vietnam thus precipitated American entry into the Second World War...".(2) Even at this early date, President Roosevelt anticipated postwar colonial revolutions in Asia, and feared that the ideal of self determination would succumb to the ambitions of empire rebuilding. Therefore, meeting with Churchill and De Gaulle at the Casablanca Conference in 1943, Roosevelt promoted the idea of international trusteeship for colonial nations with the ultimate goal of their complete independence. Although he eventually won the tacit approval of his other war-time allies, Josef Stalin and Chiang Kai Shek, he was unable to sway Winston Churchill who, like the French, wanted to protect his country's economic interests. FDR tempered his approach to this issue in the face of British objections, but he did not conceal his distaste for the French.(3) Because France had, in his view, been weak and ineffectual in the face of German aggression in 1940 and had quickly given in to Japanese pressure on Indochina in 1940-1941, Roosevelt felt that France had forfeited the right to postwar consideration as a major world power. FDR wanted to assure that the principle of anti-colonialism would succeed in at least one place, and chose Indochina as his personal area of interest because, as he told Secretary of State Cordell Hull, "...France has milked it for one hundred years. The people of Indochina are entitled to something better than that."(4)

In April 1945, Major Archimedes L.A. Patti, an American intelligence officer, met in Hanoi with Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Vietnamese colonial resistance. Ho was ready to align himself with the Americans, but Roosevelt's death in that same month left Ho without active American support against French claims. In September 1945, Ho Chi Minh announced the establishment of the Republic of Vietnam with American officers in attendance. He transmitted through Patti a letter to President Harry S. Truman, but it remained unanswered.

Harry Truman assumed the Presidency as an effective domestic legislator, but a foreign policy neophyte. Nevertheless, he established the framework of foreign aid and military treaty obligations that dominated United States foreign policy throughout the administrations of all successive postwar presidents.(5) Until 1948, confrontations between the United States and the Soviet Union over spheres of influence in Europe were relatively minor. In that year, the Communist coup d'etat in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin Blockade, and the implementation of the Marshall Plan through the Foreign Assistance Act effectively ended hopes for postwar collaboration by the wartime allies.

Meanwhile, pleas for American support from Ho Chi Minh fell on deaf ears. The United States lost interest in promoting international trusteeships that would weaken and alienate European states whose help was needed to balance Soviet power in Europe.(6) By 1949, the Soviets had exploded their first nuclear bomb and the Communist revolution had succeeded in China.

This series of events led to fears that Communism would advance throughout the Asian mainland beginning with Vietnam, ultimately spreading beyond the sea to Japan and Australia. United States officials began to view any rebellion as communist-inspired. The China Lobby, a coalition of American businessmen and politicians, blamed members of the State Department for the abandonment of support for Chiang Kai Shek, head of the Chinese Kuomintang government and a war-time ally. Because of this, they maintained, the United States "lost China." They pointed to the case of Alger Hiss, a State Department official convicted of perjury for denying membership in the Communist Party, as proof of communist infiltration into United States government agencies. Eventually they forced the dismissal of most of the government's Asia experts.(7)

The effects of the developing Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union resulted in a reversal of the previous American appraisal of Ho Chi Minh. Formerly considered a nationalist, he was now recognized as a long-time Comintern agent with strong ties to Communist China, hence a danger to American national interests.(8) Fears of Ho deepened in 1950 when the Soviet Union recognized his government and the United States became embroiled in war in Korea.

The containment theory, as expressed in the Truman Doctrine, had successfully limited communist expansion in western Europe. Administrative officials now sought to apply it on a world-wide basis, ignoring strictures imposed by its author, George Kennan, who stressed the importance of its selective application. Containing communist expansion became the basis of United States diplomatic and military planning. The adoption of National Security Council (NSC) Advisory 68 expanded the containment concept to include the use of military deterrence. The NSC recommended a massive arms build-up by the United States and its allies, the use of psychological warfare, and

> ...operations by covert means in the field of economic warfare with a view to fomenting and supporting unrest and revolt in selected strategic satellite countries.(9)

With the adoption of these NSC proposals, the Cold War expanded into a global arena and military force was accepted as an authorized response to communist actions. By 1950, the United States had become

> domestically conditioned, in fact predisposed, to the perception of a threat from its central enemies, the Soviet Union and China, arising anywhere in the world.(10)

Furthermore,

> The overriding concept of helping "free peoples" threatened by armed minorities (meaning Communists) or outside pressures (meaning from the Soviet Union or later Communist Chiña) became central to Americans' view of their role in the world.(11)

With the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, that country became the focus of the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. Beginning with Korea, a pattern of policy-making developed that forged what Robert J. Donovan calls a series of links stretching from Korea to Vietnam. Korea was considered strategically important to the United States after World War II because of its location between the Chinese mainland and Japan. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a major address, referred to the ending of United States military occupation and the establishment, through the auspices of the United Nations, of an independent Korea. In fact, the country was divided in two, as Vietnam would later be, with a communist regime in the north and a presumed democratic, United States-sponsored one in the south. President Truman's advisors were convinced that North Korea would never attack South Korea without large-scale Soviet and Chinese aid. Truman now faced the specter of adding the "loss of Korea" to the "loss of China". To save both his administration and his party, he immediately adopted a tough stance, stating,

> Korea is the Greece of the Far East. If we are tough enough now, if we stand up to them like we did in Greece three years ago, they won't take any next steps. But if we just stand by, they'll move into Iran and they'll take over the whole East. There is no telling what they'll do if we don't put up a fight now.(12)

An advocate of containment, Truman preferred a United Nations-sponsored "intervention" over a war declared by the United States. This would enable him to bypass Congress and downplay the importance of the war. Truman hoped that if the United States involvement appeared to be a logical outgrowth of the containment policy, protest against it would be minimal. For the most part his hopes were realized. Although there was widespread fear of nuclear war in the early 1950s, the Korean War did not generate the public controversy that characterized escalation of the Vietnam War.

Emphasis by the United States on promoting military strength as a deterrent to future communist expansion was marked by its pursuit of military alliances. The United States became signatory to seven major alliances between 1947 and 1954. Of those, five - the Philippine Treaty, the Australia/New Zealand/U.S. Treaty (ANZUS), the Republic of Korea Treaty, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), and the Republic of China Treaty - most strongly affected Asia. All seven treaties provided that each party

> recognizes that agression by means of armed attack in the treaty area against any of the parties...would endanger its own peace and safety...

and that each will

> ...in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.(13)

Although these treaties reflected the logic of a world in which communist expansionism was greatly feared, the reality of military stalemate in Korea after two years of fighting led to public reconsideration of the U.S. commitment there. During the election of 1952. Republican presidential candidate General Dwight D. Eisenhower correctly gauged public support for an early end to the Korean War. Bound by his campaign promises to end the war and limit military spending, President Eisenhower was forced to accept the Korean stalemate. The July 1953 armistice was an acknowledgement of that acceptance.

Although the underlying problems were not solved, the fighting in Korea was over and United States' Asian commitments were now apparently limited to Japan. There was little public awareness of an increasing U.S. economic commitment to various factions in Indochina and probably less memory that, in 1950, the United States had reacted to Soviet and Chinese recognition of Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam with an announcement that "the resources of the United States" would "be deployed to reserve Indochina and Southeast Asia from further Communist encroachment."(14)

The Korean War resulted in a revision of the United States position regarding French efforts to re-establish colonial control of Vietnam. Instead of being considered imperialistic, France was now perceived as the first line of defense against communist expansion in Southeast Asia. The United States had, in fact, already contributed to French ambitions in Indochina through the Marshall Plan. Money provided for reconstruction within France made possible diversion of French funds to support maintenance of French control in Vietnam. French requests for United States support soon expanded to include direct aid for its military operations there. Still burdened by its role in Korea, the United States found it expedient to let the French fight while it helped to pay the costs. Even before the outbreak of the Korean War, in February 1950 the United States government had countered Soviet recognition of Ho Chi Minh's Democratic Republic of Vietnam by recognizing the French-appointed Bao Dai regime as the legitimate government of Vietnam. In May of that year, President Truman offered Bao Dai ten million dollars in foreign aid.

The invasion of South Korea aroused concern that China, with Soviet approval, would invade Vietnam. These fears prompted Truman to send more aid and a military mission to Vietnam. In spite of warnings against this course of action by American informants on the scene, the United States increased its support of the French in Vietnam until it had assumed almost eighty percent of the cost of the war.(15) The extent of a Soviet threat in Southeast Asia at this time is unclear. As Kattenberg points out, despite its aggressive actions,

> ...nowhere outside of Eastern Europe did the Soviet Union move firmly or inflexibly to acquire control.(16)

China was a more likely aggressor in Asia, but its potential for international adventurism was limited by the difficulties the Communist government faced in consolidating power in its own country. Even China's intervention in the Korean War can be explained as a reaction to General Douglas MacArthur's aggressive tactics and consequent fears that the United Nations' forces would cross the Yalu River in an invasion of China.

Application of the Cold War containment theory to the Far East created serious problems in the Truman administration's approach to foreign policy. As one historian explains it,

> President Truman had transferred his Cold War images from Europe to southeast Asia and based his policies there on facile analogies rather than on specific Asian realities. But Asia was not Europe and what had worked in Europe would turn out to be a disaster in Indochina.(17)

The assumptions on which the Truman policies were based carried over into the Eisenhower administration and became the basis of its approach as well.

President Eisenhower considered several factors in his assessment of the status of Indochina in American foreign policy. The first was a 1952 National Security Council report evaluating the potential effects of a communist-controlled Indochina. It concluded that such an outcome would imperil all of Southeast Asia and emphasized the possible adverse consequences of the spread of communist domination to Japan. This was not a new concern. As early as 1949, David K.E. Bruce, the United States Ambassador to France, had suggested the same possibility. First Vietnam, then Burma, then Thailand would fall like a row of dominoes, an analogy adopted by Eisenhower. This domino theory helped justify continued United States assistance to the French in Vietnam.

Eisenhower's second concern arose out of his belief that a strong France, allied to the United States, was needed to defend western Europe against the Soviet Union. This belief dated back to the time of the Truman administration; it was passed on to, and accepted by, President Eisenhower and his advisors. To assure French cooperation, the United States was forced to support French goals in Vietnam, adopting the uncomfortable position of advocating colonialism in the name of the greater good.

The Soviet Union and China had provided Ho Chi Minh with $400,000,000 in aid over a nine-year period beginning in 1945. Although the threat of Sino-Soviet military intervention in Vietnam was more perceived than actual, it was a strong enough perception to influence the Eisenhower administration.(18)

> Surveying the Far Eastern situation in early 1953, the new administration found itself in agreement with the Truman group on at least one count: the enemy wore a single face in Korea and Indochina, and had to be countered with substantial American help.(19)

The administration official with the greatest influence on President Eisenhower in shaping foreign policy was Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. Dulles frequently commented on the importance of maintaining United States prestige in Asia, emphasizing Indochina's special importance. This assertion was reinforced in a special study report prepared by United States Representative Walter Judd, stressing the value of the area's natural resources and the loss of markets for United States products that would follow communist control.(20) Eisenhower supported a continued French presence in Vietnam but, applying a lesson from the Korean War, he wanted to see the Vietnamese trained to fight for themselves. Administration pressure on the French finally led to the Navarre Plan, calling for the augmentation of the Vietnamese National Army, a new training program for the Vietnamese, activation of nine more French battalions, and a plan to drive the Viet Minh out of the Red River Delta.

The ensuing military engagements, instead of advancing French goals, eventually culminated in the battle and siege of Dien Bien Phu and the final defeat of French forces. Here, in a fort they had built to cut off Viet Minh supply lines, the French army found itself cut off from supplies and reinforcements, facing the reality of surrender. President Eisenhower, on the other hand, faced a serious dilemma. Against the urging of his Vice President, his Secretary of State, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Eisenhower strongly opposed unilateral United States military intervention. He understood that the American people would not accept another Asian war in which the United States bore the brunt of the casualties. His attempts to obtain British cooperation were resoundingly rejected. Winston Churchill declared,

> What we are being asked to do is to assist in misleading the Congress into approving a military operation which would be itself ineffective, and might well bring the world to the verge of a major war.(21)

Reaction from Congress was swift and mainly negative. John F. Kennedy, the junior Senator from Massachusetts, said,

> I am frankly of the belief that no amount of American military assistance in Indochina can conquer..."an enemy of the people" which has the sympathy and covert support of the people.(22)

Army Chief of Staff General Matthew B. Ridgway predicted that United States military intervention in Vietnam would ultimately necessitate 500,000 to 1,000,000 troops, monthly draft calls of 100,000, and the occupation of an island in the Gulf of Tonkin for use as a base of operations. Even at this level of commitment, he maintained, United States military strength and technological superiority could not guarantee victory.(23)

If President Eisenhower needed further persuasion to reinforce his own aversion to unilateral military action in Vietnam, he had it in this strong Congressional and military opposition. France, demoralized by its own military blunders and its inability to prevail on its own resources, was now ready to withdraw from an untenable position. Eisenhower therefore abandoned any thoughts of rescuing the trapped French garrison at Dien Bien Phu in favor of reliance on a negotiated solution at the Geneva Conference on Indochina, scheduled for July 1954.

Although the initial intent was full participation in the Geneva Conference, the United States attended in the role of an interested observer for several reasons. First, American officials were concerned lest their active participation be interpreted as a de facto recognition of the Chinese Communist government, whose representatives were present. Second, there were suspicions that the conference included a hidden agenda, that of saving face for the French by denying the finality of their military defeat. Finally, plans for the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization were even then underway. Prior acceptance of the results of the Geneva Conference could involve the United States in commitments conflicting with its treaty goals.

A United States presence at the conference was crucial, however, to offset the growing image of the Soviet Union and China as the leading peacemakers in Asia. In fact, all the major powers had hidden agendas at Geneva. By supporting French aims and pressuring Ho Chi Minh to concede to them, the Soviet Union hoped to influence France to remain outside of the European Defense Community. China, by assenting to the proposed partition of Vietnam, saw a chance to enhance its international prestige and, at the same time, to keep the United States out of Indochina. Partition would also increase the Viet Minh's reliance on China's guidance and control.(24) In the end, loopholes in the wording of the final Geneva Accords and implementation of treaties establishing "defense perimeters" designed to limit communist penetration in Asia permitted the United States to build up South Vietnamese military forces before the proposed national reconciliation in elections scheduled for 1956.

The so-called first Vietnam War, from 1945 to 1954, convinced the United States to establish military alliances in anticipation of future need. Eisenhower had proposed a "NATO" treaty for Asia in his first State of the Union Address. Precedents for it existed in the series of treaties already concluded. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization was formally established at the Manila Conference in September 1954. Its members were the United States, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Pakistan. Separate protocols designated Laos, Cambodia, and the "free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of Vietnam" as areas under its protection. SEATO provided the United States with added justification for its support first of the Bao Dai regime and later of the Diem government.(25)

After the French departure from Hanoi on October 9, 1954, General J. Lawton Collins, a special envoy sent by Eisenhower, met with Ngo Dien Diem and offered him $100,000,000 in aid. In October 1955, Diem defeated Bao Dai in a national referendum, established himself as Chief of State, and proclaimed the Republic of Vietnam with himself as President. His actions were supported by American envoys on the scene even though ballot tabulation was falsified to give Diem an inflated victory. By 1955 the United States was actively training the South Vietnamese army and providing direct financial support to the Saigon government.

Meanwhile, Ho Chi Minh, in the aftermath of betrayal by all the participants at the Geneva Conference, agreed to accept aid from the Soviet Union in July 1955, and in December of that year started major land reform programs in North Vietnam. Stanley Karnow points out that, motivated by ideology, Ho's program was unduly harsh in its extermination of a designated "landlord" class and led to atrocities which Ho acknowledged and errors which he promised to rectify after the program had been in effect for a year. Diem, however, had to be cajoled and ultimately forced into starting any land reform in the South.

From the beginning, and in spite of praise from his American supporters who considered him the "Chiang Kai Shek of Vietnam", Diem was a problem for the United States and did not fulfill the administration's hopes for a pliant but democratically-minded head of government in South Vietnam. He was a puppet, but a puppet with a mind of his own, not one dedicated to promoting United States interests. He was an elitist and no believer in democratic reform. He installed members of his family as his top advisors and did little to answer the needs of the Vietnamese people. He was a devout Catholic in a land of Buddhists and a Northerner trying to rule the South. Nevertheless, as Diem himself well knew, he was considered the best alternative for support that the United States had at the time. In a letter to Diem, President Eisenhower attempted to explain to him that the United States objective in South Vietnam was to "discourage any who might wish to impose a foreign ideology on your free people." Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. comments that

> It was not clear that the people were so free or the ideology as Eisenhower supposed, but his mood defined the mood in which Washington began the Vietnam adventure.(26)

Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, the major architect of American foreign policy in the Eisenhower administration, saw Soviet conduct as governed by "irreligion" and helped promote the idea of the United States as the champion of good in a world-wide struggle with evil. Dulles had also been a proponent of what was known as the "New Look" in foreign policy, reliance on the threat of massive retaliation as a deterrent to communist expansion. In actuality, with Armageddon as a virtually assured result, the United States was unlikely to react to communist provocation with nuclear force. Instead, there was limited armed response and increased reliance on covert operations. Colonel Edward G. Lansdale returned from a CIA mission to Vietnam with warnings of Diem's unpopularity in South Vietnam and concern over the unrealistic United States assessment of the situation. In retrospect, he later stated

> When the troops unite with the people, the war starts being won. Asian communists understand this. Too few on our side do. People still get trampled under as our soldiers strive for the tactical goals given them. As long as this happens, we cannot win.(27)

By this time, however, the Korean War had changed the American attitude toward the French-Indochinese War. The image of monolithic communism advancing under Soviet and Chinese sponsorship was reinforced when Chinese troops provided aid to the North Vietnamese. According to the domino theory, the French were a defense against the spread of communism in Indochina. There was little, if any, understanding of the forces of nationalism at work in Vietnam.

The relationship between United States support of France in Vietnam and the importance that policy makers allotted to keeping France within the European Defense Community was not publicly acknowledged. France would not commit itself to support of the EDC without United States support in Vietnam. The great fear at the time was that, without France as a partner in the defense of western Europe, the other countries might reach an accommodation with the Soviet Union, disregarding the domino theory as propounded by the United States. If France would not stand with the European alliance, all of western Europe could ultimately join its eastern half under the banner of communism. Correspondingly, the fall of Vietnam would be followed by that of Asia and the Near East.

At the same time, the patriotism and confidence in United States armed might widely shared during this period lent military intervention on a global scale an aura of plausibility. Concepts of containment, dominoes, intervention and linkages of seemingly unrelated foreign policy questions in different parts of the world dominated the foreign policy of the United States in the decade following World War II. Countervailing views of scholars and diplomats familiar with Asian history were disregarded and even denigrated. No credence was given to their position that conflict in Vietnam and other former European colonies in Asia reflected national rather than ideological goals. This circumstance profoundly affected the subsequent history of decision making relative to involvement by the United States in Vietnam.

Although the situation in Vietnam was only one of many around the world viewed by American policy makers in the light of Cold War anticommunism, it was fated to become the most controversial and costly of all. It has given rise to still unresolved debate about the lessons to be learned from it, and to lingering questions about American foreign policy.

NOTES

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[3] Paul M. Kattenburg, The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy. (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1980), p. 4.

[4] Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage. p. 4.

[5] Robert J. Donovan, Nemesis. (9 New York: St. Martin's, 1985), p. 9.

[6] George C. Herring, America's Longest War, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 8.

[7] An excellent account of the China Lobby's effect of U.S. politics can be found in Ross Y. Koen, The China Lobby in American Politics. (New York: Octagon Books, 1974).

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[10] Kattenburg, The American Trauma in Vietnam, p. 12.

[11] Donovan, Nemesis, p. 34.

[12] President Truman's conversation with George M. Elsey, July 16, 1950. Korea - June 16, 1950 Folder quoted in Donovan, Nemesis, p. 36.

[13] Albert C. Ganley, Thomas C. Lyons, and Gilbert T. Sewall, After Hiroshima. American Since 1945. (Wellesley Hills: ISP, 1985), p. 22.

[14] Stanley Karnow, Vietnam, A History. (New York: Viking Press, 1983), p. 169.

[15] Baritz, Backfire, p. 66, 76.

[16] Kattenburg, The American Trauma in Vietnam, p. 28.

[17] John G. Stoessinger, Why Nations go to War. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), p. 110.

[18] Kattenburg, The American Trauma in Vietnam, p. 28.

[19] Gurtov, The First Vietnam Crisis, p. 25.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 26-34.

[21] Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage, p. 6.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[23] Baritz, Backfire, p. 87.

[24] Herring, America's Longest War, p. 40.

[25] Ganley, After Hiroshima, p. 63.

[26] Schlesinger, The Bitter Heritage, p. 14.

[27] Edward G. Lansdale, In the Midst of Wars. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 233. Quoted in Baritz, Backfire, p. 94.

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FATEFUL DECISION 1: FRANCE IS PERMITTED TO RECLAIM ITS COLONIAL EMPIRE IN INDOCHINA

CHRONOLOGY
(adapted from Karnow and Moss)

1943 - The OSS funds Vietminh actions against the Japanese in Vietnam.
1945: OSS operatives work with the Vietnamese to rescue downed United States flyers and go on espionage and sabotage missions with them.

1945:
Mar 9 - Japanese take over French administration throughout Indochina.
Mar 11 - Bao Dai proclaims the independence of Vietnam under Japanese control.
Apr 12 - FDR dies; Truman becomes President.
May 8 - Germany surrenders.
Jul - Potsdam Conference; Allied leaders assign British to disarm Japanese in South Vietnam; Chinese nationalists have the same task in the North.
Aug 14 - Japan surrenders.
Aug 18 - Japanese transfer power to the Vietminh
Aug 23 - Bao Dai abdicates
Aug 29 - Ho Chi Minh proclaims provisional government in Hanoi.
Sep - America supports the French efforts to re-establish colonial authority in Indochina.
Sep 2 - Ho Chi Minh declares Vietnam independence.
Sep 13 - British forces under General Douglas Gracey land in Saigon, will soon return French to power.
Sep 26 - First American to die in Vietnam; Lt. Col. A. Peter Dewey of the OSS killed in Saigon.
Nov - Indochinese Communist Party dissolved, replaced by broader-based association for Marxist studies.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS

Vietnamese

Bao Dai
Ho Chi Minh
Le Duan
Le Duc Tho
Truong Chinh

French

Georges Thierry D'Argenlieu
Georges Bidault
Leon Blum
Emile Bollaert
Jean Cedile
Jacques Philippe LeClerc
Leon Pignon
Jean Sainteny
Etienne Valluy

Americans

Lucien Conein
A. Peter Dewey
George Kennan
Charlton Ogburn
Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Harry Truman
Archimedes Patti

Others

Douglas Gracey
Norodom Sihanouk
Joseph Stalin
Winston Churchill

FATEFUL DECISION 1: FRANCE IS PERMITTED TO RECLAIM ITS COLONIAL EMPIRE IN INDOCHINA

U.S. President: Harry S. Truman Year: 1945

In the earliest days of the Truman administration, within three months of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's death, the United States entered into agreements with its wartime allies that resulted in a return of French military forces to Vietnam and the ill-fated French attempts to re-establish its colonial government there.

President Roosevelt had opposed the use of French troops in the liberation of Indochina, in keeping with his determination that trusteeship in the region would follow the defeat of the Japanese. However, his own State Department opposed his policy, citing agreements dating back to 1942 in which the United States policy was stated as a commitment to "the integrity of France and of the French Empire...". The department's Far Eastern Division opposed placing conditions on restoration of French rule or attempting to persuade the French to agree to a trusteeship because these bureaucrats feared the effects of weakening France as a world power on postwar collaboration "in Europe and in the world as a whole."

When Truman became President he was a neophyte in foreign relations. For all practical purposes Roosevelt had acted as his own Secretary of State and even if he had intended to take Truman into his confidence, there had been no time to do so before his death. The decisions leading to the early return of France to Vietnam were made within the context of the Potsdam Conference of July 1945, when the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union met to plan for the occupation and control of Germany and to settle various European problems. Churchill had urged that such a meeting be held as early as possible, and Stalin had also requested it. These two leaders were suspicious of each other's postwar intentions, but Truman did not then share Churchill's concerns about Soviet expansionism.

By the time the conference convened, the war in Europe had ended. Midway through the meetings, Winston Churchill was replaced as British Prime Minister by Clement Atlee, in the wake of a Labor victory over the Conservatives in British Parliamentary elections. The first proposed action of the conference was the establishment of a Council of Foreign Ministers to deal with peace treaties and settlements of outstanding territorial questions. Although agreement was quickly reached relative to the Council, serious disagreements among the three leaders soon followed. Among the issues raised were Stalin's violation of the Yalta Agreements by establishing puppet governments in eastern European countries and his apparent hedging on permitting promised free elections there. The newly-created Council assumed responsibility for these problems, along with questions of reparations and trusteeship proposals relating to former colonies of the Axis powers.

Although the conference later dealt primarily with postwar issues relating to Germany, its first declaration was an "unconditional surrender" ultimatum directed to Japan, warning of total destruction of the Japanese mainland if such a surrender was not forthcoming. Indeed, the successful tests of the atomic bomb at Alamagordo, New Mexico, rendering this destruction possible, had already taken place. This declaration was issued on July 26 and was signed by Churchill, Truman and Chiang Kai Shek of China. Chiang had been invited to the conference as a show of support for him by the Allied leaders, and he had no other influence there. Stalin did not sign this Potsdam Declaration because the Soviet Union was not yet at war with Japan. But the issues related to Japan, trusteeship of Japanese-controlled territories and demobilization of Japanese forces in southeast Asia, were major effects of the Potsdam Conference for our purposes, although they were minor concerns at the conference itself. The Allied leaders agreed on a plan to disarm the Japanese in Vietnam by dividing the country at the sixteenth parallel, with the British administering the South and the Chinese Nationalists the North. In the words of Stanley Karnow, it was a formula for catastrophe.

Consideration of alternatives to acceptance of attempts to restore French power in Vietnam is complicated by the fact that the decision to do so took place in the context of wider concerns. It was not reasoned out in consideration for the interests of the Vietnamese, their rights as nationals in their own country, or even the general principle of national liberation and self-determination espoused by President Roosevelt. Instead, concern for world power status among the European nations and old fears and rivalries reemerged at Potsdam in negotiations designed to address a whole range of postwar problems.

The British commander, General Gracey, was a paternalistic colonialist who violated his orders to avoid interfering in internal Vietnamese affairs. He publicly declared at the outset that the French would assume civil and military control within a matter of weeks. The Japanese had left the defeated French administration in place, governing through it during the wartime occupation. The French were demoralized as the war ended, and Saigon was in a state of chaos with rival Vietnamese fighting the French and each other in an attempt to carve out areas of power. General Gracey, continuing to exceed his orders, declared martial law and released and armed French army troops to impose order. These troops went on a rampage against the Vietminh, who were demanding independence and sovereignty and who had set up a provisional Executive Committee. The Vietminh called a general strike on September 24 and the situation further deteriorated into violence with an immediate and increasing French military presence, tacitly accepted and assisted by the United States and Britain, in the South.

Meanwhile, in the North, Ho Chi Minh formed a National Liberation Committee and launched the "August Revolution", taking over Hanoi and issuing a declaration of independence. Bao Dai complied with a Vietminh demand for his resignation and, after a meeting with Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi, warned General De Gaulle that, "if you could feel this yearning for independence that is in everyone's heart" the General would understand. He went on to say that no future French administration would be obeyed.

> Every village will be a nest of resistance, each former collaborator an enemy, and your officials and colonists will themselves seek to leave this atmosphere, which will choke them.

Needless to say, this eloquent warning, along with others from United States intelligence agents, was ignored. The United States and its wartime allies embarked on a path committing them to support the return of French rule to Vietnam.

Voices in opposition to the decision supporting French claims in Vietnam were seeking attention, pointing out the dangers of reimposing hated colonial rule, warning of the weakness and corruption of those Vietnamese interests friendly to the French. Ho Chi Minh was courting the United States, seeking their support and offering his trust and cooperation.

What degree of influence or power could the United States impose at this particular time to determine the course of history in southeast Asia? The world was just barely emerging from six years of devastating war. The rubble of war was not yet cleared away, the refugees not resettled, the boundaries of Europe still fluid. The governments of the United States, England and France were in a state of flux. The United States had gone from ten years of depression into war production and then war itself. On the very eve of that war isolationism was still strong throughout the country. In some ways the United States was as untried as its new President in the intricacies of world power. The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan were still two and three years in the future. With the death of Franklin Roosevelt, the most powerful advocate of colonial independence was gone. Within five years the United States, under Truman's leadership, had fully assumed the mantle of world power, stepping into the vacuum created by western European economic and political disorganization. But in 1945, this outcome was not so clear. The newly-chartered United Nations had not yet convened its General Assembly. The American public was clamoring to "Bring the boys back home!" The clarity and immediacy brought to bear on dealings with Japan, the defeated enemy, did not carry over into direct concern for Indochina until the developing Cold War, the Chinese Communist Revolution and the Korean War focused United States attention there yet again within a global context that distorted American policy makers' understanding of internal events in Vietnam.

The decision to permit the French to attempt to re-occupy Vietnam through military action against the Vietminh, even as the latter moved to establish a provisional government, was made almost by default in the sense that the United States did not become directly involved but looked the other way as the British supplied American military equipment to French units and provided transportation to Indochina for those units. However, American denial of Ho Chi Minh's repeated pleas for recognition of his government in favor of supporting France forced Ho to agree to a French presence in Vietnam because he was unable to drive them out militarily. Ho feared the Chinese more than the French because, as he told his people,

> The last time the Chinese came they stayed a thousand years. The French are foreigners. They are weak. Colonialism is dying. The white man is finished in Asia. But if the Chinese stay now, they will never go.

It was to expel the Chinese from the North that Ho entered into an agreement with the French permitting them to re-enter that area. The agreement all too soon broke down and the fighting resumed that ultimately ended in the siege of Dien Bien Phu. For this reason, this first fateful decision was as crucial as those made later on, when the full attention of the country was turned on Vietnam.

From 1946 to 1950, the United States attempted to maintain a policy of neutrality in Indochina while also attempting to persuade the French to recognize Vietnamese desires for national autonomy. In 1947, the French initiated efforts to persuade Bao Dai to return to Vietnam to head a collaborationist government. Bao Dai tried to make his return conditional upon a French pledge of independence, but the actual agreement signed qualified this pledge to the extent of rendering it meaningless. Because the French had been unable to defeat the Vietminh, they relied upon a strategy of working through Vietnamese collaborators. In July 1949, Bao Dai returned to Vietnam as Head of State under the Elysee Agreement, which recognized Vietnamese independence but kept foreign affairs, defense and finance under French control. Under this agreement, Vietnam was also obliged to become a member of the French Union.

Between 1947 and 1950, American assessment of the situation in Vietnam and its own resultant policy changed from, in Secretary of State George Marshall's phrase, "no solution to offer" to acceptance of the so-called "Bao Dai solution". In February 1950, the United States recognized the Bao Dai regime as an "independent state within the French Union." This policy represented a victory of a "European-oriented" strategy, advanced by one wing of the State Department, over the "Asian-oriented" strategy proposed by those in the Division of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs. The Asian strategy depended on withholding support for the French until they changed their colonial policies in Vietnam to provide meaningful independence there. The European strategy, advanced by the American Embassy in Paris and the Office of Western European Affairs at the State Department, called for "virtually unconditional acceptance of French colonial policy...". In the end, American fears of a victory in Vietnam, and the Cold War context within which United States foreign policy was framed, determined the choice. Also at that time, the existence of a strong French Communist Party fed American fears of a breakdown in western European unity against the USSR.

Ho Chi Minh, who had been attempting to find areas of compromise with the French, abandoned these attempts in the face of the Bao Dai solution and the hardening of United States policy. In early 1950, he persuaded the Soviet Union and China to recognize his government as the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, thus convincing the West that they had been right in seeing his regime as a Soviet satellite.

The United States followed recognition of the Bao Dai government with its first major commitment of financial and military aid to the French in Vietnam. These actions can be traced back to the initial acceptance of French colonialism in 1945. Even though the United States sought to maintain a neutral status and even offered to mediate between the French and Vietminh (an offer rejected by the French), the underlying principle of concession to the French to maintain their cooperation in Europe dominated administration thinking.

How much could have been changed if the United States had followed a different course of action? How might the history books read if the United States had:

- recognized the government of Ho Chi Minh?
- called for a withdrawal of all foreign forces from the country?
- attempted to seek an international solution through the United Nations?
- attempted to influence the British in their actions, including protesting the irregular actions of General Gracey?

Were any of these or other possible decisions realistic alternatives within the international situation at the time? If none of the alternatives would have been effective in preventing the conflict or in hastening Vietnamese independence, should the United States in any case have publicly declared a position in opposition to restoration of colonialism in Vietnam on moral or ethical principles alone? Finally, was it inevitable that the United States continue its support of the French by recognizing Bao Dai and providing financial aid, or could a different United States policy toward Vietnam been followed in 1950 in spite of tacit acceptance of French military actions in 1945?

SUGGESTED STUDENT READINGS
(Reproduced for distribution in Appendix A)

The Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, 1945

From Gareth Porter (ed.), Vietnam: The Definitive Documentation of Human Decisions. In two volumes, Stanfordville, NY, 1979.
- Document 10, Memorandum by Kenneth P. Landum, Division of Far Eastern Affairs, Department of State, July 10, 1944.
- Document 15, Draft memorandum by G.H. Blakeslee, Far Eastern Division, Department of State, April 1945.
- Document 28, Resolution of the National Conference of the Indochinese Communist Party.

SUGGESTED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Karnow, Stanley, Vietnam. A History. New York, 1983, Chapters, 2,3,4.

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Have the students compare the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence with the United States Declaration of Independence, listing in columns similarities and differences of their main ideas and style of writing.

2. Have students discuss the following questions:

   a) Why did Ho Chi Minh model the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence on that of the United States?
   b) Was the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence designed more for foreign or domestic purposes? On what reasoning do you base your conclusion?
   c) What domestic needs did Ho hope to fill by issuing this document?

To promote discussion, raise points such as these:

- What does the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence tell you about the person who wrote it? Can you identify his goals?
- Why would Ho Chi Minh seek the support of world opinion for his action in declaring the independence of Vietnam? Did the authors of the United States Declaration of Independence have similar purposes?
- Is Ho justified in claiming Vietnamese independence partly on the grounds of having seized it from the Japanese after the French, in effect, surrendered it?
- Whose right is it to determine the fate of Vietnam at this point?
- Since the French originally colonized Vietnam through military conquest, should they have a right to reclaim it if they can now reconquer it?

3. Using Document 10, have students do the following:

    a) Outline President Roosevelt's policy on the trusteeship of Indochina, with particular reference to his opposition to the French returning there after World War II.
    b) Speculate on events that might lead to a departure from this policy by the United States government.

4. Comparing the information in Document 10 to that in Document 15, discuss the following:

    a) How did the United States Department of State's perception of the world order differ from FDR's? What might have accounted for these differences?
    b) What foreign policy considerations influenced President Truman's subsequent course of action?
    c) What alternatives could you suggest to the Truman administration's choices of actions?

In considering these questions, think about the concerns and principles on which FDR based his position, as reported in Document 10. Identify the concerns and principles underlying the State Department position as presented in Document 15. Develop arguments pro and con from both positions.

5. Analyze Document 28 for its positive and negative aspects with respect to future American national interest. Make a list of each, giving examples to defend your choices.

6. Using all three documents, draft a set of Potsdam Resolutions on Indochina that would appease France and at the same time recognize Vietnamese goals of democracy and independence. In doing so, consider such factors as United States national interest, questions of international security, the process of making foreign policy, and the concerns or principles that should govern that process.

7. Project the effects of your new resolutions on the history of Vietnam in the post-World War II period.

In approaching this set of activities, compare Document 28, the Communist Party plan, with some of the points made by the State Department in Document 15. What can you learn from this comparison about the thinking and attitudes of the Vietnamese communists? How well did they understand the realities of the postwar international situation? Do they seem to be part of a Soviet-led drive for world communism? Do you think they are sincere in their advocacy of the people's political and economic rights? Do they seem capable of governing their country?

8. Assume the role of one of the following, and write a report or letter to President Truman in 1945 advocating your position on the decision he must make as to whether to support the return of the French to Vietnam:

   - Ho Chi Minh, stating the case for independence and requesting United States recognition and support;
   - George Kennan, author of the containment policy;
   - Georges Thierry D'Argenlieu, or other appropriate French official;
   - U.S. State Department Representative;
   - Winston Churchill.

Teachers: Assign students to write letters to Truman as one of the above or other appropriate individuals. Set it up so that several students write in the role of each individual. Discuss differences in interpretations of each individual's viewpoint as well as differences among viewpoints. See if students can reach consensus or support of one position.

9. Write an article for the Opinion-Editorial pages of the newspaper or letter to the editor expressing your view of the role the United States should play in the immediate postwar world to promote future world peace. What are the problems or dangers in the present situation (1945) that can lead to conflict? Are they more political or economic? How crucial is United States leadership or cooperative action with other countries to avoid these dangers? What interests should the United States support in European colonies in Asia that had been taken over by the Japanese in World War II? Should the United States attempt to return to a policy of neutrality or disengagement? Is such a choice possible?

10. Organize the class as a press conference in which reporters from newspapers and magazines with a variety of editorial viewpoints including French, Chinese and Vietnamese journalists question President Truman about his support of the continued French presence in Vietnam. Alternate students, including women students, in the role of President. In preparing the students for this activity, point out ways in which Truman could be challenged about his expectations of the results of this decision. If materials are accessible, ask students to do research in periodicals contemporary to the time to get the flavor of the writing as well as the point of view.

11. Organize the class as the first post World War II convention of the International Peace Advocacy League (this is a fictional organization). Have the delegates conduct a discussion of what the organization can and should do in the present situation to promote the ideas of the peace movement.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TEACHER REFERENCES

Note to teachers: There are many general histories of the Vietnam War that may be used for background material. All provide extensive bibliographies. Our objective is not to repeat those sources but to indicate which have been most helpful in preparing this curriculum.

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FATEFUL DECISION 2: SUPPORT OF NGO DINH DIEM AND HIS REJECTION OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS PROVIDED FOR IN THE GENEVA ACCORDS OF 1954.

CHRONOLOGY

1949	Bao Dai returns to South Vietnam to rule as Chief of State under the French.
1954:	
Jan 25	U.S., British, French, and Soviet Foreign Ministers meet in Berlin; agree to hold a conference on Korea and Indochina in April.
Mar 13	Battle of Dien Bien Phu begins.
Apr	Eisenhower decides against intervention in Indochina after British rejection of coordinated effort.
Apr 7	President Eisenhower unveils domino theory in news conference.
May 7	French defeated at Dien Bien Phu.
May 8	Indochina section of Geneva Conference, chaired by Britain and the Soviet Union, begins.
Jun	French Government falls.
Jun 16	Bao Dai appoints Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister.
Jun 17	Pierre Mendes-France becomes new French Prime Minister; pledges ceasefire in Indochina within one month; negotiates secretly with Chinese Minister Zhou Enlai.
Jul 7	Diem returns to Saigon.
Jul 21	Geneva Accords reached separating Indochina into three countries; provisional separation of Vietnam at the 17th Parallel until free elections held. United States does not sign agreement but agrees to honor it. Bao Dai government denounces agreement.
Sep 8	SEATO formed. A separate protocol extends SEATO to include Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.
Oct 9	French forces leave Hanoi.
Oct 24	Eisenhower sends Diem a letter pledging $100,000,000 to build up military forces.
Oct	General J. Lawton Collins arrives in Saigon to assure South Vietnamese of American support; United States Navy helps refugees from the North flee to the South.
1955:	
Jan	U.S. provides direct financial aid to Saigon; begins to train South Vietnamese Army.
Apr 28	Diem crushes Binh Xuyen sect after seeing his government nearly fall under pressure from a coalition of his enemies. He is saved through the efforts of Air Force Colonel Edwin Lansdale, OSS (CIA) operative.
Apr	Period ends for deployment of French forces to the South and regrouping of Vietminh troops in the North.
Jul 16	Diem rejects the Geneva Accords; is supported by the United States
Jul	Ho Chi Minh accepts Soviet aid.
Oct 23	Diem defeats Bao Dai in a referendum, becomes Chief of State.
Oct 26	Diem proclaims the Republic of Vietnam with himself as President.
Dec	Massive land reforms in North Vietnam; landlords tried by people's tribunals.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS

Vietnamese

Bao Dai
Duong Van Minh
Le Duan
Le Duc Tho
Ngo Dinh Diem
Pham Van Dong
Tran Kim Tuyen
Ho Chi Minh

French

Georges Bidault
Leon Blum
Emile Bollaert
Pierre Mendes-France
Leon Pignon
Etienne Valluy

American

Dean Acheson
John Foster Dulles
Elbridge Durbrow
Dwight D. Eisenhower
Mike Mansfield
Matthew Ridgway
Walter Bedell Smith

Other

Anthony Eden
Vyacheslav Molotov
Zhou Enlai

FATEFUL DECISION 2, SUPPORT OF NGO DINH DIEM IN HIS REJECTION OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS AS PROVIDED IN 1954 GENEVA ACCORDS

U.S. President: Dwight D. Eisenhower Year: 1955-1956

In January 1953, when Dwight D. Eisenhower became President, the military situation in Vietnam was steadily deteriorating and no end to the fighting was in sight. Since 1950, the French had steadily lost control over more and more territory and were confined to small areas around Hanoi, Haiphong, Saigon and along the Cambodian border. The United States had assumed the major financial burden of continuing the conflict. With the very real possibility of French defeat and a communist Vietnam in view, President Eisenhower made several decisions that ultimately placed the United States in the position then held by France, that of primary adversary to the Vietminh.

First, when the French were besieged at Dien Bien Phu in what was to be their final military surrender, Eisenhower refused to agree to a unilateral United States rescue attempt, although he did indicate willingness to support a joint allied operation. Since this was not forthcoming, he did nothing. Second, President Eisenhower chose to participate in the Geneva Conference on Indochina and to abide by its results. Following the conference, he led in formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and actively assisted in organizing a non-communist regime in southern Vietnam under the leadership of then Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem.

The Geneva Conference had originally been called to work out a political settlement in Korea as well as to resolve the Indochina war. It was convened on April 26, 1954. The talks on Korea ended in stalemate. On May 8, the day after the Vietminh flag was raised over the fort of Dien Bien Phu, talks on Indochina began. Nine nations took part: the United States, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, China, the French-sponsored Vietnamese government of Bao Dai, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Vietminh), Laos, and Cambodia.

The conference was held in an atmosphere of avoidance and mistrust. As described in Stanley Karnow's Vietnam,

> The Vietminh's official avoided Bao Dai's representatives and spurned the envoys from Cambodia and Laos; they also boycotted the French, who did not encounter the Chinese until late in the episode. The Russians dropped disparaging remarks about the Chinese... . The French resented American attempts to use them as intermediaries, and the Americans blamed the French for keeping their maneuvers secret. The Americans also expressed impatience with the British, who they felt were not sufficiently rough.

In the end, the conference did not provide a lasting political solution to the Indochina conflict, only a military truce during which a political settlement might be negotiated. No such settlement occurred, and the conference merely orchestrated a pause between two wars or, more accurately, between two phases of the same war.

The terms of the truce were for the most part designed by the Chinese envoy, Zhou Enlai, in collaboration with Pierre Mendes-France of France. The French Minister, under the pressure of a self-imposed deadline for concluding the negotiations, accepted Chou's proposals and his assurances that the Chinese were in Geneva "to reestablish peace, not to back the Vietminh." Mendes-France thereupon entered into covert negotiations with Zhou apart from those at the official conference table, and also worked with Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam and V.M. Molotov of the USSR to complete details of a compromise agreement. Zhou's goal was prevention of further United States intervention in Vietnam. To achieve this, he was willing to sacrifice Vietminh interests and accept a continued French presence in Vietnam.

Under the terms of the 1954 Geneva Accords, Vietnam was temporarily divided into two states: North Vietnam, controlled by Ho Chi Minh and the Communists, and South Vietnam, under the leadership of Ngo Dinh Diem. Diem had been appointed Prime Minister by the largely absentee Bao Dai. Diem also enjoyed United States support on recommendation of CIA agents and other Americans who had met and spoken with him. The imposition of a military cease-fire and the establishment of the dividing line between north and south at the seventeenth parallel were elements of the secret agreement instigated by Zhou, as was the provision for national elections to reunite the country, to be held by July 1956. These provisions were only reluctantly accepted by the other parties to the conference. The United States pledged to abide by the agreement in the spirit of anti-communism that dominated its foreign policy. Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam felt betrayed by the lengthy period before national elections. Ho Chi Minh, in effect isolated by Zhou's maneuvering, felt deserted and defeated by an outcome that gained back for France much that it had lost on the battlefield while failing to impose a political settlement to the conflict. The only documents signed provided for cease-fire accords in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The other "understandings" were entered into on the basis of oral agreements.

During the two-year interval before the election deadline, France was to withdraw its forces from the north and the Vietminh theirs from the south. France was to remain in the south to guarantee the armistice until the elections. Diem and Ho both worked to consolidate political control in their respective areas. Diem, aware of the weakness of his overall support among the Vietnamese in comparison to that of Ho, had no intention of participating in national elections. He began courting increased American support to substitute for the French. In spite of differences within the Eisenhower administration over Diem's reliability, the United States provided $300,000,000 in assistance and entertained plans to train Diem's army. The SEATO treaty, formalized at this time with protocols calling for protection of "free territories under the jurisdiction of Vietnam", encouraged Diem to escalate his efforts. With the guidance and assistance of CIA-sponsored Colonel Edward G. Lansdale, who had arrived in Vietnam in 1954 and set up a covert American operation known as the Saigon Military Mission, Diem deposed Bao Dai in an October 1955 referendum manipulated to give Diem 98.2 percent of the vote. Diem then publicly renounced the elections called for in the Geneva Accords on the basis that they could not be "absolutely free". He declared the Republic of Vietnam under his Presidency. By April 1956, Diem had ended almost all official French presence in South Vietnam and consolidated his power under American influence.

Meanwhile, in the north, Ho Chi Minh established communist control to the alarm of Washington, but with serious problems that limited his power to affect events in the south. In anticipation of national reunification, and in compliance with the Geneva Accords, the Hanoi government had transferred 100,000 Vietminh activists to the north. Others remained in their native areas in the south. Many non-communist and Catholic refugees from the north had headed south in a major exodus of population among middle and upper class North Vietnamese who feared for their religious, economic and social status under a communist government. While Ho had the advantage of a supportive populace among those who remained, the north was economically devastated.

With supplies of rice from the south now denied as well, the north averted famine only by importing it with Soviet aid. Ho had based based land reform on ideology, liquidating so-called "landlords" who themselves were mostly small landholders in the typical style of the north. This led to a year of errors and atrocities for which Ho apologized and sought to rectify, but he lost much good will that had to be regained by concerted effort. When Diem renounced national elections, therefore, Ho was not in a position to act in response. He counseled the Vietminh remaining in the south to wait until the north had been consolidated and to follow the Soviet party line, "all conflicts can be resolved by peaceful negotiations."

However, with his own power consolidated in the south, Diem began an offensive against the southern Vietminh. As in the north, innocent people were arrested or denounced along with those who were Vietminh or their supporters. By 1956, most Vietminh cells were destroyed and their remnants were living furtively underground in remote areas.

the election deadline of July 1956 passed with no attempt to comply with it. The United States supported Diem's refusal to cooperate with the agreements, saying that the Vietnamese themselves should determine the matter. There was a possibility that the partition become permanent along the lines of settlements in Germany and Korea. In 1957, the Soviet Union proposed admission of the two Vietnams to the United Nations. The United States' determination to support Diem's government was bolstered by the arrival of the refugees from the north. This group, composed primarily of French-oriented Catholics and other formerly privileged elites, fostered an American vision of South Vietnam as a state based on western culture and institutions. In spite of this, the Eisenhower administration categorically rejected any recognition of a communist government in the north such as would be necessary for a two-state solution.

Diem's repressive tactics backfired, sending many former Vietminh and others, who would have preferred simply to live in peace, into the underground. Diem further alienated the general peasant population by uprooting thousands from their native villages to place them in "agrovilles" designed to isolate the rural population from the communists. These centers, later enlarged upon as the strategic hamlet program, also failed to achieve their intended goals.

In late 1957, Hanoi authorized the southern communists to organize armed companies. They were confined to deep forests and marshes in the Mekong Delta and were largely precautionary, as the communists wanted to be perceived as observing the Geneva Accords prohibitions against military buildup by one side in the other's teritory. Ho Chi Minh discouraged armed attacks against the Diem regime until 1959. By then the southern Vietminh, fearing total annihilation, were able to persuade Ho that some action was necessary. Limited "armed struggle" was to supplement "political struggle". As a result, thousands of South Vietnamese government officials were assassinated between 1959 and 1961, prompting a military response from Diem. Military officials replaced civilian administrators in the provinces, further alienating the population. American advisors now assisted these military administrators, who isolated themselves from the local people and neglected their economic and social needs. They lived in fortified garrisons into which they retreated at night, leaving the villages to the infiltration and influence of the Vietcong, the name applied to the Vietminh by Diem and meaning "Vietnamese Communists."

In December 1960, the National Liberation Front was declared in the south by Hanoi. Its intent was to unite many different southern elements in opposition to Diem, and to give credence to the claim that North Vietnam was not violating the Geneva Accords by military action in the south. Although the front was controlled by its communist components who did receive their orders from Hanoi, it was not simply a satellite of Hanoi as the Americans claimed. It reflected a genuinely pluralistic Vietnamese society that, in Karnow's view, could have provided the United States with opportunities for alternatives to the policies it pursued from then on.

The Eisenhower administration abandoned its commitment to honor the Geneva Accords with respect to Vietnamese national elections because of its reliance on the domino theory and its related fear that any new Communist government would become part of an attempt to undermine other established governments in the interest of establishing world Communism. It went on to increase its support of Ngo Dinh Diem. By April 1960, the United States had spent more than a billion dollars in support of South Vietnam, but its influence on Diem was waning. He was an oligarch whose government was composed primarily of family members and his regime was riddled with factions and corruption. He favored the wealthy elite over the peasants in his land policies, permitting the retention of large landholdings and exacting payment from peasants for land the Vietminh had given them free during the war with the French. Diem's flaws were no secret, but he shrugged off American pressure for reform because he knew the United States had no one better to support in its determination to preserve an anti-communist state. As the year drew to an end, however, and the Eisenhower administration was about to end along with it, Ambassador Eldridge Durbrow suggested from Saigon that, "We may well be forced, in the not too distant future, to undertake the difficult task of identifying and supporting alternative leadership."

Among the alternatives available to the United States to the decision to abandon national elections in Vietnam in 1956 were the following, advanced in various proposals at the time:

- Insist on holding the elections, accepting the likelihood of victory by Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh;
- In keeping with this, recognize the Vietminh reunified government with Ho as its head;
- Insist that Diem reform his government under the threat of withholding all support;
- Refrain from organizing SEATO, or at least from attaching to the treaty the protocol for protection of Vietnam;
- Accept a two-Vietnams solution.

Other possible alternatives, not explicitly considered at the time, include refraining from taking over from the French the responsibility of supporting South Vietnam and/or not sending Colonel Lansdale to Saigon to groom Diem as an American-sponsored anti-communist leader. (Lansdale played a major, if not a decisive, role in persuading Washington that supporting Diem was worth the risk.)

When the United States decided to participate in the Geneva Conference, concern for gaining French support of the proposed European Defense Community was important to its analysis. Shortly after the conference ended, however, the French Parliament rejected EDC in any case. Strictly European considerations were then replaced by fears of a Chinese Communist expansionism to match that of the Soviet Union. The shadow of the "loss" of China, although attributed to the Democrats, influenced President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles, who believed that nationalist movements in Southeast Asia needed western intervention to ward off Communist takeovers. They also held that if the western colonial powers withdrew, it was up to the United States to step in to prevent the Communists from succeeding.

With all of this in mind, and given the Vietminh determination to unite the country, we can explore the effects of United States actions and the possible effects of the various alternatives. We can also raise the issue of the degree to which the Eisenhower administration was or was not hemmed in by previous decision and actions, such as those examined in Fateful Decision 1.

SUGGESTED STUDENT READINGS
(See Appendix A)

- Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference on Indochina, 1954.
- South Vietnamese Statement on Reunification, 1955.
- Eisenhower Explains the Domino Theory, 1954.
- Ho Chi Minh's Appeal after the Geneva Agreements, 1954.
- From Porter, Ed., Vietnam, Vol. 2:
  - . Document 3, Note from Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Van Dong to the two Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, August 17, 1955;
  - . Document 10, Note from Giap to Chairman of the International Control Commission, Shri Parhasarathi, April 10, 1956;
  - . Document 11, Message from the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference to the governments of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of Vietnam, May 8, 1956.

SUGGESTED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Karnow, chapters 5,6.

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

N.B.: Activities suggested for use with Decision 1 can be adapted for use with this or in subsequent decisions. All suggested activities should be considered interchangeable among the various decisions.

1. (Any portion of this sequence can be used alone instead of in combination with others, to fit into the time available to teachers.)
   - Prepare a timeline from 1955-1957 outlining major events in European, Soviet, Asian and American history.
   - Develop a cause and effect chart illustrating the effect of one or a series of events on the development of American foreign policy in Vietnam during this period.
   - Divide the class into a number of groups equal to the number of student readings assigned (some teachers may not choose to assign all suggested readings). Each group is to work with one of the readings, identifying its major points relating to the events on the cause and effect chart.
   - Each group selects one person who will act as the author of the particular reading and present the point of view espoused by it in a panel discussion. Students not on the panel will form a press corps to question the panel.
   - Regroup the students into a maximum of four groups, each of which discusses the following questions:
     a) Was there sufficient justification for the cancellation of the 1956 elections?
     b) What alternative actions might have resulted in holding the elections or providing a promising attempt at reunification?

c) If the elections had been held as provided for in the Geneva Accords, who would have won? How would Vietnam then have changed over the next ten years?

2. Organize debates on both, or either, of the following propositions:

a) Resolved that the United States, as a free and independent democracy with a tradition of government by the people, should support national liberation movements throughout the world and also support, in the words of Woodrow Wilson, "free covenants freely arrived at". RESOLVED, therefore, that the United States should actively support the 1956 Vietnamese national elections provided for in the Geneva Accords.

b) Resolved that the United States, as the leader of the free and democratic countries in a world threatened by the spread of anti-democratic and repressive communist governments, should assume responsibility for preventing the spread of communism in all circumstances. RESOLVED, therefore, that the United States should support rejection of Vietnamese national elections by the present South Vietnamese government in agreement with that government's contention that (1) they are not bound by the Geneva Accords of 1954 and that (2) the proposed elections are not really free and would result in the imposition of the communist system on the entire country.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TEACHER REFERENCES

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Porter. Vietnam, Vol. 1, Document 395: Letter from Eisenhower to President Ngo Dinh Diem, October 23, 1954.

FATEFUL DECISION 3: THE UNITED STATES TRAINS AND SENDS MILITARY ADVISORS TO SOUTH VIETNAM.

CHRONOLOGY

1961:	
Jan	Outgoing President Eisenhower warns Kennedy that Laos will create a major crisis in southeast Asia.
Jan 6	Soviet Premier Khrushchev announces support for all wars of national liberation. His position encourages the Kennedy administration to support the counterinsurgency movement in South Vietnam.
Mar	Kennedy reaffirms U.S. support for Laos sovereignty; Britain and the Soviet Union propose an international conference to resolve the crisis.
Apr	Bay of Pigs invasion fails; Kennedy administration deals with the crisis in Laos; Kennedy considers military intervention, but decides on a political solution.
May	Vice President LBJ visits South Vietnam; returns, saying that U.S. should send more support to Diem; Kennedy approves sending special forces to South Vietnam; also authorizes secret warfare against North Vietnam and a secret war in Laos.
May 16	Geneva Conference on Laos opens; later creates neutral coalition government headed by Souvanna Phouma.
Jun 4	Kennedy meets Nikita Khrushchev in Vienna; they agree to support a neutral and independent Laos. Kennedy rejects neutrality for Vietnam.
Oct	Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow visit Vietnam; recommend disguised increased military aid; Kennedy balks at disguised aid but does send more equipment and advisors.
Nov	Special forces are deployed in the Vietnamese central highlands near Pleiku to work with the indigenous mountain tribes, the Montagnards. They develop civilian irregular defense groups designed to win the confidence of the Montagnards by combining defense with social and economic programs.
1962:	
Jan	The Air Force launches Operation Ranch Hand, aerial spraying of defoliating herbicides to deny cover to the Vietcong and to destroy their crops.
Feb 6	American military assistance command formed in South Vietnam; advisors increased from 700 to 12,000.
Feb 8	MACV (Military Assistance Command-Vietnam) is established in Saigon, General Paul D. Harkins in command.
Feb 27	Diem's palace bombed by two South Vietnamese pilots; he survives the attack.
May	Communists form battalion-size units in central Vietnam.
Jul 23	Geneva Accords on Laos signed.
Oct	Cuban Missile Crisis, ending in Soviet withdrawal of missiles from Cuba; U.S. and Saigon governments begin strategic hamlet program.
Dec	Approximately 9,000 U.S. advisory and support personnel are in South Vietnam; 109 Americans were killed or wounded during this year.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS

Vietnamese

Ho Chi Minh
Ngo Dinh Diem
Ngo Dinh Nhu
Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu
Ngo Dinh Thu
Nguyen Van Thieu
Tran Kim Tuyen
Tri Quang

Americans

George Ball
Chester Bowles
McGeorge Bundy
William Bundy
Lucien Conein
J. William Fulbright
John Galbraith
Paul Harkins
Roger Hilsman
John F. Kennedy
Robert F. Kennedy
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Henry Cabot Lodge
Frederick Nolting
Walt W. Rostow
Dean Rusk
Maxwell Taylor
Cyrus Vance
Robert Thompson

FATEFUL DECISION 3: THE UNITED STATES TRAINS AND SENDS MILITARY ADVISORS TO SOUTH VIETNAM

U.S. President: John F. Kennedy Year: 1961

When John Kennedy assumed the Presidency in January 1961, Vietcong insurgency was growing. However, at the time, it seemed less of an immediate problem than Soviet involvement in a civil war in Laos, which was the only situation in Southeast Asia that outgoing President Eisenhower counseled Kennedy to watch. Eisenhower considered Laos "the key to the entire area..." and thought that American combat troops might be needed there. Kennedy chose a diplomatic approach in this instance, sponsoring another Geneva Conference at which W. Averell Harriman negotiated on behalf of the United States to arrive at an agreement by the major powers to accept a "neutral and independent" Laos.

In examining the third of our fateful decisions, we can begin to make comparisons with the circumstances and the composition of the previous administrations as they chose their course of action in Vietnam. As we have seen, the Truman administration was strongly influenced by fears of rising communism in Europe and a perceived need to prevent France from deserting the developing western European alliance. The victorious Chinese Communist Revolution and the Korean War gave credence to its added fears of Asian communism. It ignored intelligence pointing out the nationalist roots of the Vietnamese struggle against the French as well as Ho Chi Minh's attempts to arrive at an accommodation with the United States and establish political relationships. The Eisenhower administration approached the issues of Vietnam from the position of global Cold War strategy, asserting the domino theory and applying an ideological analysis to containment and defeat of the evils of "atheistic communism". The results in both cases were policies that did not reflect certain realities, in particular the true nature of Vietnamese nationalism, the risks of commitment to a permanent South Vietnamese state, and the futility of depending on Ngo Dinh Diem as the leader of an American-sponsored government acceptable to the South Vietnamese. However, through the 1950s, the United States commitment in Vietnam was limited enough to avoid serious controversy within the political administrations or among the public.

President Kennedy was a confirmed anti-communist and cold warrior, accepting the policy of containment and the domino theory. But he was also a dedicated pragmatist. Kennedy was a practitioner of the possible, incorporating political realities and public perception into policy-making. Kennedy and his close colleagues saw themselves as young, tough realists whose task was to demonstrate the administration's toughness to the Communist enemy as a prerequisite to achieving a relaxation of world tensions. Kennedy also believed that he needed to convince the political right and center in the United States of his anti-communist bona fides. Therefore he, too, relied on the kind of advice that supported policies in accord with this approach, as his predecessors had done.

Kennedy rejected neutralism, the policy he had promoted in Laos, as acceptable in Vietnam. If Laos had been a "soft" action, now was the time for a hard approach. Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles had recommended that the policy of neutralism be extended to all of Southeast Asia, but his advice only lost him his job shortly thereafter. Another dissenter to continued American involvement in Vietnam was George Ball, who warned Kennedy that up to 300,000 American troops might eventually be needed there. Kennedy's response was, "...you're crazier than hell. That will never happen."

The new President inherited a State Department whose Far Eastern Office had been purged of the experienced foreign service officers who warned in the early and mid 1940s that the Communists would win in China and that the United States should be prepared to work with them. The fact that they were right had no meaning for the China Lobby of the late 1940s, which refused to accept evidence of the weakness and corruption of Chiang Kai Shek's government. Instead, they successfully promoted accusations that these officers worked to undermine Chiang and assist the communists, thus causing the "loss" of China. Several of these officers were separated from the service during of the Truman administration. Reorganization of the Department continued under Secretary of State Dulles, who applied a test of anti-communist orthodoxy to all its policies. This process was intensified by the activities of Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy, who gave his name to a period of internal Red-baiting which further decimated the Department of its Asian experts from 1950 to 1954. There was no one within Kennedy's close circle of advisors during the early months of his administration who could effectively counter the prevailing assumption that the United States should increase its support of the Diem government and that it could accomplish its aims in South Vietnam without undue commitment of resources or American troops.

Very early in his administration, President Kennedy received a report on conditions in Vietnam from Colonel Edward Lansdale, who had previously supported Diem and now returned to the country as a Pentagon specialist. He noted the worsening situation with alarm, but instead of recognizing Diem's flaws, he blamed inadequate American support and urged an increase in aid. The President created a "task force" to plan economic, social, political and military programs for South Vietnam to prevent communist "domination". As Karnow points out, George Ball tried to limit expressions of unqualified commitment, but Kennedy accepted the report and implemented its recommendations to increase the South Vietnamese army from 150,000 to 170,000 men and to send an additional 100 military advisors, raising the total number of American advisors to 800. The administration solved the legal problem thus presented, a violation of limits on the number of advisors set out in the Geneva Accords, by failing to inform Great Britain or the International Control Commission of these moves.

While Kennedy refused to entertain the idea of withdrawing from Vietnam, he was opposed to entering into full-scale war there. His administration also disagreed with the Eisenhower administration's military policy of massive retaliation, familiarly known as the "bigger bang for a buck" on the theory that defense expenditures could be minimized by threatening the Soviet

Union with nuclear war instead of maintaining large conventional forces. (One of Eisenhower's campaign pledges had been reduction in defense spending.) Kennedy favored the policy of a flexible response and had a well-publicized interest in guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency tactics.

In May 1961, President Kennedy sent Vice President Lyndon Johnson on a mission to Vietnam. Johnson hailed Diem publicly as the "Winston Churchill of Asia" and echoed the standard phrases of the domino theory. Diem responded by proposing a further increase of his army to 270,000, necessitating also more American advisors, equipment, and financial aid. He resisted, at this time, introduction of United States combat troops. Upon receipt of this request, Kennedy consulted General Maxwell Taylor, in whom he had great confidence because of the General's advocacy of the flexible response/counterinsurgency policy. He also decided to send Taylor, along with W. Walt Rostow, deputy to National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, to Vietnam in October. In September, Diem altered his previous position against combat troops and before the Taylor-Rostow mission left Washington he had requested them through Ambassador Frederick Nolting. The mission was therefore instructed to consider this along with other strategies, which included increase of support to the Vietnamese and provision of more equipment such as helicopters and light aircraft.

In the report that Taylor prepared, he noted the dangers of committing combat troops to Vietnam, including the issues of U.S. prestige, the pressure to reinforce troops if the first contingent failed, and the possible limitlessness of an open-ended commitment. He also pointed out that it might become necessary to attack North Vietnam and the danger of a general Asian war. In spite of all this, he recommended that up to 8,000 troops be sent with more to follow if necessary, and said that the job could not be done without them. This part of his report was privately conveyed to the President, and carefully concealed from the public. Secretary of Defense McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff rejected the secret Taylor proposal as inadequate, urging instead a force of six United States divisions - 200,000 men - to show that "we mean business". Kennedy himself persuaded McNamara to moderate this position, and to work with Secretary of State Dean Rusk to prepare a memorandum approving more aid to Diem but deferring the combat option. The President strongly resisted rapid escalation because, as he said

> The troops will march in, the bands will play, the crowds will cheer, and in four days everyone will have forgotten. Then we will be told we have to send in more troops. It's like taking a drink. The effect wears off, and you have to take another.

Kennedy continued to authorize increases in the number of American advisors in Vietnam until the number totaled 16,000 in 1963. As time went on, these advisors covertly entered into actual combat. For example, American flyers took part in combat missions from Bienhoa Airport but called them military training missions.

Because Kennedy did not send combat troops to Vietnam, even though there were rumors and speculations in the press about the Taylor report's actual recommendations, his posture was seen as moderate. However, the Taylor-Rostow mission to Vietnam had an escalating effect on administration policy. Taylor's report opened up future possibilities of American troops fighting in Vietnam with his assessment that, although there was risk involved of a major Asian war resulting, those risks were minimal. He also claimed that North Vietnam was "extremely vulnerable to conventional bombing", the threat of which would deter it from intervening in South Vietnam, and that both Hanoi and Peking would have more serious logistical difficulties maintaining forces in Vietnam than would the United States. He also said that American forces could operate in the physical terrain without difficulty. These assertions, all of which were proven wrong by later events, were accepted on the basis of Taylor's reputation within the Kennedy administration.

The Taylor Report is very revealing of the assumptions of the time. It reflects misunderstanding of the nature of the war as well as that of the combatants. There was no recognition of any political problems. It assumed unanimity of identity between the government and the people of South Vietnam. But there were others who balked at the report's conclusions, among them George Ball and then-Ambassador to India, John Kenneth Galbraith. While Taylor and Rostow were in Vietnam, Kennedy asked Galbraith for his personal assessment. The Ambassador emphasized the deteriorating condition of the Diem government and that of the American operation to support it. He expressed his concern that the Americans could end up in the same futile position as the French had been. He strongly advocated political rather than military approaches to the problem. However, he did not have a strong influence on the President, and his viewpoint was not taken into account.

In fact, although it was not acknowledged at the time, the die was cast for ultimate escalation. Administration rhetoric proclaimed its determination to stop communism in Southeast Asia, engaging American prestige in the outcome. This was always a major concern for Kennedy, and increased the difficulty of retreating from hardline positions as the United States military investment in Vietnam steadily increased.

The facts about this increasing investment were not shared with the American public. In part this was because all of these actions violated the Geneva Accords, but also to avoid public debate. United States withdrawal had become unthinkable to the administration in spite of the growing evidence of Diem's inadequacies, his lack of concern for his people, and his refusal to make any reforms in his oligarchic regime. Robert Kennedy asserted on a trip to Saigon in 1962 that "we are going to win" and winning became the exclusive goal of an administration that believed the "can do" spirit of America could accomplish anything. Consideration of political solutions was abandoned for exclusive concentration on the choice of military options. Even though television pictures showed Americans in combat, Kennedy was not further challeged at a news conference in January 1962, when he answered simply "No" when asked if troops were fighting in Vietnam.

Kennedy's stance led to the conduct of a shadow war in Vietnam for the duration of his administration. In the ringing phrases of his inaugural address, he had said that the United States would

> pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.

He spoke of a new generation to whom the torch had been passed, and seemingly welcomed the power and responsibility of what has been called the "American century". He weathered the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Berlin Crisis, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, all of which centered attention on Europe and Latin America rather than on Southeast Asia. But it was there in the end that his decisions betrayed his own standards of rational analysis. By late 1962, Senator Mike Mansfield, returning from South Vietnam with a report for the president, had changed his mind about his early strong support of Diem and had the courage to speak his mind to Kennedy. He concluded that after spending $2,000,000,000 over a seven-year period, things were worse in South Vietnam rather than more hopeful. He blamed this not only on the growth of the Vietcong, but on faulty United States policy and on the Diem regime for its failure to share political power. In fact, Diem was becoming ever more isolated from the people and under the influence of a narrowing elite circle, primarily his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, and Nhu's wife. Mansfield recommended complete reappraisal of American policies in Vietnam with a view to avoiding further involvement. He told the president,

> It is their country, their future that is at stake, not ours. To ignore that reality will not only be immensely costly in terms of American lives and resources, but it may also draw us inexorably into some variation of the unenviable position in Vietnam that was formerly occupied by the French.... The great increase in American military commitment this year has tended to point us in that general direction.

Kennedy rejected the course of action espoused by Mansfield. Controversy persists as to whether Kennedy would have initiated a withdrawal from Vietnam in a second term, or whether he had even made a decision one way or the other at the time of his death. In any case, during the remaining months of his Presidency, he maintained the tough stance he felt necessary to exorcise Richard Nixon's 1960 campaign charges against him that he was "soft on Communism". As a result, in the final weeks of his life he was entangled in the bizarre and self-serving machinations of the South Vietnamese military officers' coup d'etat against Diem and the subsequent murder of Diem and Nhu.

The Kennedy administration pursued its Vietnam policies in an atmosphere of minimal Congressional and public debate that seems unthinkable today. It is partly because of the Vietnam War that Americans are more cynical about their government and its actions and that journalists are more adversarial and less protective when government seeks to control or conceal information on the plea of "national security." John F. Kennedy was able to deceive the public and lie to the press about the extent of the escalating build-up of American military involvement in Vietnam. Why was this necessary in his eyes if the country was united in an anti-communist stance and in a commitment to support "free" governments in Europe and Asia? What issues might have emerged in an open debate about Vietnam if the public had access to information about the increasing success of the Vietcong and the true nature of the Diem Government? Apparently Kennedy was more concerned with placating conservative political opinion than courting that of a liberal power base which he believed would continue to support him. His election victory over Richard Nixon had been paper thin and he needed to consolidate his political position. As has been implied in this brief review, Kennedy also believed, in keeping with his essential pragmatism, in proposing what he thought was possible even if it did not accord with his personal beliefs. In the area of domestic civil rights, a major issue of the early 1960s, Kennedy was slow to act on his campaign commitments and tried to dissuade public efforts such as those of the Freedom Riders because he feared that they would create a negative image of the United States abroad. However, he ultimately abandoned his political caution in a speech accepting civil rights as a "right or wrong" issue. He did not live to reach this point on Vietnam.

Although there was lack of public debate over Vietnam during the Kennedy administration, there was considerable internal debate over the policy and over the military approaches. Much of the disagreement revolved around what level of American involvement was necessary for success, and whether the South Vietnamese forces could defeat the Vietcong without United States combat intervention. Nevertheless there was a strong minority opinion, although not within the closest inner circles, that the country was following a fruitless and unworthy path on the basis of self-deceptive reasoning.

- How could this process have been altered or avoided?
- Should a neutralist solution have been pursued?
- Should the administration have disowned Diem early on, based on his refusal to institute political reforms or broaden political power?
- Should the new administration have opened negotiations with Ho Chi Minh?
- Was it better to make policy on the basis of possible results than on moral or ethical concerns?
- What are the implications of United States action in deploying advisors in violation of the Geneva agreements?

SUGGESTED STUDENT READINGS
(See Appendix A)

Mike Mansfield Questions American Policy, 1961.

From Porter, Ed., Vietnam:
- Document 39, Telegram from Secretary Rusk to Durbrow, February 3, 1961.
- Document 40, Telegram from Durbrow to Risk, February 7, 1961.
- Document 41, National Security Action Memorandum No. 28 by Special Assistant to the President, McGeorge Bundy, March 9, 1961.
- Document 48, Telegram from Ambassador F. Nolting, Jr., in Saigon to Rusk, May 16, 1961.
- Document 49, Telegram from Rusk to Various Embassies, May 26, 1961.
- Document 50, Telegram from Nolting to Rusk, May 26, 1961.
- Document 51, Telegram from Nolting to Rusk, May 27, 1961.
- Document 52, Letter from Diem to Kennedy, June 6, 1961.
- Document 60, Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to McNamara, October 5, 1961.
- Document 69, Cable from General Taylor, in Baguio, the Philippines, to Kennedy, November 1, 1961.
- Document 71, Memorandum for the President by McNamara, November 8, 1961.
- Document 88, Report to the President on Southeast Asia-Vietnam by Senator Mike Mansfield, December 18, 1962 (Extract).
- Document 109, Report of the McNamara-Taylor Mission to South Vietnam, October 2, 1963.
- Document 115, National Security Action Memorandum No. 263, by McGeorge Bundy, October 11, 1963.

SUGGESTED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Karnow, Ch. 7.

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. To complete this activity, students will need to be familiar with the following: Cold War, containment, Truman Doctrine, domino theory, massive retaliation, counterinsurgency, limited warfare, the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. They should also be aware of the general state of United States-Soviet relations following World War II.

   Ask students to consider the following premise: United States foreign policy from 1949 on was based on the perception that a monolithic communist bloc of nations existed, threatening, by its existence and aggressive aims, the survival of democratic nations.

   In the light of this perception, agree or disagree with the following contentions, and be prepared to defend your point of view.

a) Kennedy had no alternative in making a stand against communism in Vietnam.
b) The use of counterinsurgency provided a measured response in helping maintain a world balance of power.
c) Kennedy's decision to oppose communism in Vietnam through military action was based on inexperience and misinformation from an improperly informed staff.

This activity can be used as a written assignment for which students present their conclusions in a paper, a class assignment in which they argue points in an oral presentation, or as a source of general class discussion.

2. Divide the class into groups to provide different kinds of advice to President Kennedy as the administration's Vietnam policy is developed in 1961. Each group should work together to formulate the arguments of a particular individual: John Kenneth Galbraith, Mike Mansfield, Robert McNamara, Chester Bowles, and the French Ambassador to the United States. Re-form the groups so that each is now composed of the different individuals. They are to assume that they are seated together at a White House dinner, with each group trying to reach agreement on the best Vietnam policy for the administration to pursue.

3. Organize the class as a class of Vietnamese high school students in Hanoi, discussing with their teacher the present situation in their country (1961) and what they think should be done. The same exercise can be done as students in Saigon. After the discussion, have them write letters (this can be done in groups) to The New York Times or The Washington Post in the United States, explaining to the Americans what they hope for as citizens of Vietnam and how they think the U.S. should conduct relations with their country.

4. Organize the class as the Council of Elders in a South Vietnamese village. Discuss what is happening in the village as a result of the war, Viet Cong activities, arrival of Americans in their area. Consider how the village should react to these events.

5. A committee of delegates from the American branch of the (fictional) International Peace Advocacy League visits President Kennedy in the White House. They present arguments in favor of American disengagement in Vietnam and recognition of the Hanoi government in the interest of preventing military escalation and promoting world peace. They respond to counter arguments of Kennedy and his advisors.

6. Give a writing assignment in which the students, as editorial writers in 1961, analyze the concept of balance of power as a basis for conducting world affairs. How have some of the major events since World War II (nuclear weapons, break-up of colonial empires and resultant creation of many new nations) affected this concept? Have half the class write from the editorial view supporting and half opposing the concept as a basis for American foreign policy. After the assignment is completed, hold a class discussion based on the different points of view.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TEACHER REFERENCES

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FATEFUL DECISION 4: INTRODUCTION OF COMBAT TROOPS INTO VIETNAM AND "AMERICANIZATION" OF THE WAR

CHRONOLOGY

1964:	
Jan 2	President Johnson approves covert military operations against North Vietnam by South Vietnamese.
Jan 30	General Nguyen Khanh seizes Saigon government.
Mar 8-12	Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara goes to Vietnam; pledges U.S. support for Khanh.
Apr	North Vietnam decides to infiltrate Army units into South Vietnam.
Jun 2	Honolulu Conference: objective - increased aid to South Vietnam; Pentagon finalizes plans for bombing North Vietnam.
Jun 20	General Harkins is succeeded by General William C. Westmoreland.
Jun 23	Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge resigns and is replaced by Maxwell Taylor.
Jul	Secret South Vietnamese naval patrols against North Vietnam targets. Both sides are engaged in covert warfare in violation of the 1954 Geneva Accords.
Aug 2	Gulf of Tonkin incident involving U.S. Destroyer Maddox.
Aug 3	South Vietnamese PT boats carry out raids against North Vietnamese radar stations operating in the same area as the Maddox.
Aug 4-5	Maddox and Turner Joy report being under fire in international waters by the North Vietnamese. Carrier-based U.S. aircraft fly reprisal raids into North Vietnam with LBJ's authorization.
Aug 7	Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed by Congress after LBJ uses the Gulf of Tonkin incident as a reason for increased Presidential war powers.
Oct	China explodes first atomic weapon.
Oct	General Khanh resigns and is replaced by a civilian, Tran Van Huong.
Oct 14	Khrushchev replaced by Leonid Brezhnev and Aleksei Kosygin.
Oct 30	Bienhoa airfield attacked by Vietcong.
Nov 3	LBJ wins Presidential election.
Nov	Anti-Khanh protests in Saigon.
Dec 24	U.S. military billet attacked by Vietcong.
Dec	About 23,000 Americans serving in South Vietnam. A full-scale, undeclared war exists in Vietnam with fighting in Laos and Cambodia. There have been 1,278 U.S. casualties for the year.
1965:	
Jan 4	LBJ reaffirms U.S. support for South Vietnam in his State of the Union address.
Jan 27	Tran Van Huong is ousted and General Khanh returns to power.
Feb 4	McGeorge Bundy arrives in Saigon; Aleksei Kosygin arrives in Hanoi.
Feb 7	Vietcong attack American installations near Pleiku; eight Americans killed, 126 wounded.
Feb 13	LBJ authorizes Flaming Dart, air raids against North Vietnam.
Feb 18	General Khanh leaves the country; Dr. Pan Huy Quat forms new government in Saigon.

Feb 24	Operation Rolling Thunder, sustained American bombing of North Vietnam, begins.
Feb 25	General Khanh is forced out by Air Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky.
Mar 8	Two marine battalions land at Danang, the first American combat troops in Vietnam.
Apr 6	President Johnson authorizes U.S. forces to take the offensive to support ARVN forces.
Jun 11	Nguyen Cao Ky takes over as Prime Minister in a military government of Saigon.
Jun 19	Air Marshal Ky becomes Premier of the eighth South Vietnamese government since Diem was overthrown.
Jun 26	American command reports loss of five South Vietnamese combat regiments and nine battalions in recent months.
Jun 28-30	U.S. forces undertake the first major American offensive against the Vietcong, 20 miles northeast of Saigon.
Jul 8	Lodge reappointed U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam; 18 American combat battalions now in country.
Jul 21-28	Series of decisions made by LBJ: draft calls to raise 35,000 men per month; 50,000 additional troops to be sent to South Vietnam; air war expanded.
Jul 28	LBJ approves General Westmoreland's request for 44 additional combat battalions.
Aug 7	Chinese government warns the U.S. that it will send troops to fight in Vietnam if necessary.
Sep	Chinese Prime Minister Lin Biao asserts that China will not intervene directly in Vietnam; the great proletarian cultural revolution begins in China.
Oct 23 - Nov 20	Ia Drang Valley - first conventional clash between North Vietnamese and American forces - U.S. victory.
Dec	American troop strength nearly 200,000.
Dec 25	Suspension of bombing in hopes that North Vietnamese will negotiate.
Dec	This was a pivotal year of the war. America began a sustained air war against North Vietnam. It also committed large numbers of forces to ground combat operations in South Vietnam. At year's end, there are 184,000 U.S. troops in South Vietnam. U.S. casualties for the year 1,369 killed in action and 5,300 wounded; 1965 is year one of the American War in Vietnam. (From Moss, p. 390.)

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS

Vietnamese

Bui Diem
Duong Van Minh
Ho Chi Minh
Nguyen Cao Ky
Nguyen Khanh
Xuan Thuy

Americans

Dean Acheson
George Ball
McGeorge Bundy
William Bundy
Frank Church
William Sloane Coffin
David Dellinger
J. William Fulbright
Tom Hayden
Seymour Hersh
Hubert Humphrey
Lyndon Baines Johnson
Robert Kennedy
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Melvin Laird
Edward Lansdale
Allard Lowenstein
Eugene McCarthy
Robert McNamara
Wayne Morse
Walt W. Rostow
Dean Rusk
Dr. Benjamin Spock
Maxwell Taylor
Cyrus Vance
William Westmoreland
Earle Wheeler

Others

Charles De Gaulle
Nikita Khrushchev
Aleksei Kosygin
Souvanna Phouma
Norodom Sihanouk

FATEFUL DECISION 4: INTRODUCTION OF COMBAT TROOPS INTO VIETNAM AND "AMERICANIZATION" OF THE WAR

U.S. President: Lyndon B. Johnson Year: 1965

When Lyndon Johnson became President upon the assassination of John Kennedy in November 1963, the Cold War had shifted in emphasis, partly because of events during the brief Kennedy administration. The Cuban Missile Crisis, a defining event that raised the specter of nuclear war in October 1962, convinced both President Kennedy and Soviet Chairman Nikita Khrushchev that the dangers of a foreign policy based on nuclear warfare and the acceptance of possible mutual total destruction were unacceptable. Historian John Stoessinger notes three major developments that followed. First, competition arose within the communist and non-communist alliances. Second, that competition increasingly centered on seeking influence in the new nations of the so-called Third World, former colonial possessions that had gained independence at an accelerating rate since the 1950s. In Stoessinger's words

> More nations were born in the short span of twenty years than throughout the entire history of the nation-state system. These new nations feared western colonialism more than they feared communism. Most were nonwhite and had bitter memories of racial discrimination. And most were "uncommitted" or "nonaligned" in the struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States.

A third major development was that of worsening relations between the two major communist powers, the USSR and China. China derided as weak Khrushchev's handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and was expanding its influence in Asia. China became the third nuclear power in 1964, after which American foreign policy viewed Asia as the major area of anti-communist operations and China as a major adversary. Indochina, especially Vietnam, became a test case for establishing control for all three rivals.

South Vietnam remained dangerously unstable after the overthrow and death of Ngo Dinh Diem. South Vietnamese generals and Saigon warlords vied for political control. None of the contenders had the support of the people. Because the United States had recently concluded a militarily successful intervention in the Dominican Republic, parallels were drawn between that effort and Vietnam. Although there was no real basis for comparison, the belief was fostered that South Vietnam was also a short-term problem that could be overcome with a sufficient military force directed against the Vietcong and Ho Chi Minh. In accordance with this belief, the Johnson administration made decisions escalating American military participation and ultimately imposing American control in the Vietnam War. The United States needed a viable client government in South Vietnam as its only hope against reunification of Vietnam under the communist government of the north. Under the leadership of President Johnson it committed half a million American troops in an attempt to prevent the Communist victory that would end South Vietnamese statehood.

The decision-making process of 1965 that resulted initially in the landing of 3,500 Marines at Da Nang and saw 175,000 troops in South Vietnam at year's end can only be examined with some understanding of President Lyndon Johnson's complex character. His formative childhood years were dominated by the influence of his literary, intellectual mother, who taught him that "power only had value when used to benefit people" and his overbearing father, who demanded that Lyndon constantly demonstrate his manhood, with humiliation the price of failure. LBJ's political mentor during his early Congressional career in Washington was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, whose social programs he strove to emulate in fulfillment of his mother's teachings. Johnson's equally strong drives to benefit humanity and to prove his manhood, sometimes in conflict with each other, colored his conduct of Vietnam policy and affected his relationships with his advisors. He demanded agreement while seeming to ask for honest opinions, and vacillated in his own approaches to the decisions he was called upon to make. Stoessinger asserts that

> The personality of Lyndon Johnson played an absolutely crucial role in the unfolding of the Vietnam tragedy. Here was a man of colossal pride and ego who perceived Vietnam through the lenses of the Second World War, saw Mao Tse Tung as Adolf Hitler, and himself as a western sheriff in a confrontation with Ho Chi Minh, Red China's puppet. A man who know nothing about Asian history now led the country into a major Asian war... . Lyndon Johnson thought of the United States as the "policeman of the world." Hence, any challenge, even at the most remote frontiers of the empire, would have to be met with force.

Lyndon Johnson was also a consummate politician whose skills at negotiating and deal making had been honed during his years as Senate Majority Leader in the Eisenhower administration. His style then as leader of a majority opposition in Congress to the Republican administration was one of accommodation rather than confrontation. He was famous for his use of the Biblical phrase, "Come, let us reason together." In the presidential election of 1964, Johnson campaigned as a peace candidate, promising not to expand the war in Vietnam. To defeat conservative Republican Barry Goldwater, Johnson sought to establish his strong anti-communism while recognizing the need to allay public fears of Cold War nuclear confrontation. Even then, Johnson was determined on a clear victory in Vietnam. But he pledged that he would not "...send American boys nine or ten thousand miles away from home to do what Asian boys ought to be doing for themselves." At the same time, however, he was developing a strategy that he believed would, in Karnow's words, "compel the leaders of North Vietnam to abandon the insurgency in South Vietnam - in short, to deny them victory." Plans were being made during the campaign to bomb North Vietnamese bridges, railroads, and oil storage facilities, as well as to mine Haiphong Harbor, institute South Vietnamese commando attacks against North Vietnamese coastal bases, and carry out air strikes at Communist infiltration routes in southern Laos. None of this planning was shared with Congress or the public.

Ordinarily such actions would require a declaration of war under the Constitution. In order to avoid the controversy this would provoke, as well as the onus of attacking a foreign country without Congressional support, the president and his military and civilian advisors wanted a Congressional Resolution authorizing the President to act on his own. The plans for attacking North Vietnam and the draft of a Congressional Resolution had been considered since the early spring of 1964, even though no one knew how Johnson would be able to persuade Congress to pass the resolution. Fate played into their hands in August, when a supposed attack by North Vietnamese patrol boats against American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin was used as the pretext for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This resolution, passed almost unanimously, effectively gave Johnson the power to conduct war without Congressional declaration or intervention.

During 1965, United States policy effectively, although not officially, shifted from support of a stable, independent government in South Vietnam to attempts to neutralize the participation of North Vietnam. Successive coups continued to disrupt the government until June, when, finally in yet another coup, General Nguyen Van Thieu became Head of State and Air Vice-Marshall Nguyen Cao Ky became Premier. This was the ninth South Vietnamese regime since the fall of Diem. During the continued instability, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended more bombing of North Vietnam. This policy was supported by Walt Rostow, Johnson's policy planning chief, on the ground that it would damage the North Vietnamese industrial capacity. Rostow's own deputy, Robert Johnson, conducted a study indicating that the bombing would not have the desired effect.

> Economic growth was not a major Hanoi objective, the study said... . Rather, it was the unfinished business of throwing the foreigners out of the country... . Hanoi had two pillars of strength: the nationalist component of unity and the Communist component of control... . Bombing would not affect such a regime. On the contrary, it might even strengthen it.

Rostow never brought this report to the President's attention. A massive bombing program against North Vietnam, code named, "Rolling Thunder," was launched.

During the Johnson administration, the bombing of North Vietnam was limited to targets personally authorized by the President. Primarily because of his fear that China or the Soviet Union would intervene directly if major military installations in the Hanoi area were attacked by United States planes, Johnson placed those targets off limits. For similar reasons, he rejected proposals to mine Haiphong Harbor. Subsequent military analysts blamed Johnson for prolonging the war, perhaps even forfeiting chances of victory, by these restrictions. It cannot be proved whether they were right or wrong, but the analysis overlooks the points raised by Robert Johnson's report to Walt Rostow.

In different circumstances in 1972, President Richard Nixon chose both to bomb the military targets around Hanoi and to mine Haiphong Harbor. The results of these actions, considered in Decision 5, raised controversy over their role in achieving a peace settlement that can be compared with the criticism of Johnson's actions in the 1960s.

Johnson sought to carry out plans for escalation as secretly as possible because he realized the political jeopardy of his actions. He had a uniquely personal view of the war, stating, "I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went." He referred to the soldiers as "my boys" and to other items as "my ships," "my helicopters" and "my security council." When Vice President Hubert Humphrey dissented from the policy of bombing North Vietnam, Johnson dismissed him from participation in Vietnam discussions for a year. He was allowed back only after he pledged to accept official administration policy. Throughout this period the public heard only optimistic reports. On two occasions in 1965, Secretary of Defense McNamara publicly reported confidence in the South Vietnamese government and the conduct of war, when he had just returned with the private news for President Johnson that the situation was growing worse. However, McNamara at that point recommended increased American support, which was in accordance with Johnson's intent.

Planning for the policies that led to the major military escalations of 1965 had begun immediately after the 1964 election, when Johnson convened a "working group" of eight State Department, Pentagon and CIA officials to consider United States options in Southeast Asia. Chaired by William Bundy, the group was to report to a panel made up of Secretary of State Rusk, Secretary of Defense McNamara, Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, Generals Wheeler and Taylor, and five other "principals." They would refine the proposals for submission to the President, who would make the final choices. Bundy finally reduced the working group's reports to three options: continue the present policy of moderation; attack North Vietnam immediately; or undertake "graduated military moves" to retain flexibility "to escalate or not, and to quicken the pace or not." In his analysis, Karnow says that Bundy had resorted to a classic bureaucratic device known as the "Goldilocks Principle." By including a "too soft" and a "too hard" choice along with a middle of the road or "just right" choice, he could expect the vote to go to the "just right" option. With George Ball once again dissenting in favor of prudence, the panel of ten recommended to Johnson a somewhat watered down version of the flexible approach.

Johnson received this report in February 1965. Even while he remained undecided, the Vietcong attacked the town of Pleiku, killing and wounding Americans guarding United States aircraft there. This convinced Johnson to bomb the North Vietnamese, and the first stage of escalation was underway. In March, General William Westmoreland, in charge of American forces in South Vietnam, requested troops to protect Da Nang airbase. LBJ immediately approved the request and two Marine battalions landed in Vietnam. "Mac" Bundy had urged the President to warn the American public that a long struggle lay ahead, but Johnson rejected this advice. With polls in his pocket indicating a national "positive" rating of seventy percent, Johnson was certain that the public would support him. By keeping silence about the reality of a protracted war, and by disclaiming the validity of media reports and criticism, Johnson widened a "credibility gap" that would be his later undoing.

Requests for additional troops increased rapidly. By April, 50,000 American soldiers were in Vietnam. As more soldiers arrived , missions also increased and restrictions against combat engagement were lifted. In July, with a state of stalemate in effect, McNamara, Bundy, Rusk, Taylor and Westmoreland offered another set of three options: withdraw, continue fighting at present levels, or substantially expand the military pressure. Johnson chose the third option, authorizing an increase in troop levels to 200,000. Vietnam had been expanded into a major war without Congressional consultation. It soon became obvious that Westmoreland's hopes of overwhelming the enemy with increasing numbers of troops were futile, and that the bombing program was a failure as well. Johnson was nevertheless unable to admit or believe that American power was unable to defeat a smaller, and presumably weaker, foe. Against all better judgment, the escalation continued.

President Johnson rejected several opportunities to end the war through negotiation. For example, French President Charles De Gaulle, a supporter of neutralism for Vietnam, proposed a new meeting of the Geneva Conference which LBJ rejected. Between 1964 and 1967, United Nations Secretary General U Thant made a minimum two dozen unsuccessful tries to bring the two sides together. U Thant summarized his feelings at a press conference:

> I am sure that the great American people, if they knew the true facts...will agree with me that further bloodshed is unnecessary. The political and diplomatic methods of discussions and negotiations alone can create conditions which will enable the United States to withdraw gracefully from that part of the world. As you know, in times of war and of hostilities, the first casualty is truth.

On one occasion in 1964, U Thant flew to Washington to make a personal offer to President Johnson to organize talks with the North Vietnamese. In this instance, Johnson, unwilling to rebuff the United Nations Secretary General directly, agreed. At the same time, Soviet Prime Minister Khrushchev had been engaged in his own efforts to persuade the North Vietnamese to negotiate, using badly-needed Soviet aid to North Vietnam as leverage. This initiative, in which Khrushchev was also designated as U Thant's intermediary to Hanoi, came to naught when Khrushchev himself was displaced by his rivals in the Kremlin.

It is uncertain whether these overtures could have led to successful negotiations at that time. Washington had proposed its own terms in Hanoi via J. Blair Seaborn, chief Canadian member of the International Control Commission that had been established to oversee implementation of the 1954 Geneva Accords. The Johnson administration offered the Communists "economic and other benefits" if they would abandon their insurgency in South Vietnam, but threatened that they would "suffer the consequences" if they refused. Pham Van Dong, the North Vietnamese official with whom Seaborn conferred, retorted that continued United States attacks against North Vietnam would only serve to extend the war. He advised Seaborn to seek new American proposals in keeping with the Geneva Agreements.

President Johnson was not so much committed to the idea of conducting war as he was to negotiating a peace settlement from a position of power that would enable the United States to dictate terms. He was, as we have seen, also determined not to preside over an American defeat be it diplomatic or military. Thus he tied himself to the flawed South Vietnamese state with its succession of self-serving "leaders" and he led the United States into assuming conduct of a war for which there was no public consensus.

Lyndon Johnson ultimately fell victim to his own lack of understanding and respect of other cultures and of his reliance in foreign affairs on the same wheeling/dealing approach that he had successfully applied in the United States Senate. Alternating force with manipulation, threat with promise, Johnson never understood, as Karnow explains it,

> ...his inability to bargain with foreign leaders the way he haggled with American politicians, businessmen, and labor negotiators. In 1965, to cite an example, he was baffled by Ho Chi Minh's rejection of his offer of a huge economic project to develop the Mekong valley in exchange for concessions to end the Vietnam War.

John Stoessinger concludes that

> Lyndon Johnson is one of the clearest and most tragic examples of a leader who was prevented by his personality from seeing other possibilities that were clearly available... . Until ruination and defeat stared him in the face, he was simply unwilling - and unable - to consider a whole range of alternatives that continued to be open.

Even while the fateful decisions of 1964 and 1965 were in the making, the first public dissent to the Vietnam War was taking shape. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), formed early in the 1960s to unite students on college campuses around the country in support of Civil Rights issues, sponsored a protest march against the war in Washington in April 1965. The march was not expected to draw wide participation when it was first planned in December 1964, but it signalled the beginning of an anti-war movement when the bombing of North Vietnam and the moves to escalate United States military presence in South Vietnam aroused opposition on the part of liberal groups. Although the 20,000 who showed up were many more than the planners expected, and delegations arrived from over fifty colleges, this was only a small forerunner of the protest movement to come. Other early activities of the anti-war movement included the campus "teach-ins," the first of which was held at the University of Michigan in March 1965, shortly after the first bombings of North Vietnam. Forty-nine faculty members proposed that classes be suspended for a day to hold a campus-wide discussion of the implications of the American intervention. On March 24, 3,500 students and faculty attended discussions in four lecture halls. "Teachers spoke about the war, students questioned them or argued, seminar groupings formed and reformed, and the sessions went on until dawn." The teach-ins are described in Milton Viorst's book about the protest movements of the 1960s, Fire in the Streets. The model created at the University of Michigan was immediately adopted by Columbia, the University of Wisconsin, New York University, Rutgers and the University of Oregon. The teach-in movement spread to many other colleges and universities and, on May 15, a "national teach-in" took place in Washington, connected by telephone to 122 campuses across the country.

The teach-ins presented conflicting viewpoints on the war, with that of the administration fairly represented. At the end of May, a teach-in at Berkeley, California was the first to transform itself into an anti-war rally, with thousands in attendance. The teach-ins ended with the school year, without influencing the government but making it clear that students on the nation's college campuses were overwhelmingly opposed to the war.

By August 1965, the progression of anti-war demonstrations that would continue while the fighting lasted had begun in earnest. A weekend of protests outside the White House in which over 350 demonstrators were arrested, led to the organization of the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a coalition of thirty-three groups to plan continued protests. On the weekend of October 15, the Committee sponsored protests in sixty cities with a total of 100,000 participants. Some of these were more militant than previous demonstrations had been. In Berkeley, 15,000 marchers advanced on the Oakland Army Terminal, where they were turned back by heavily armed police. In New York, David Miller burned his draft card at the Whitehall Army Induction Center, eventually serving two years in jail for the act. Draft calls rapidly increased as the war escalated. President Johnson chose to step up the draft and extend enlistment periods instead of mobilizing the reserves, believing that the latter course would be more likely to alienate American public opinion. On college campuses, SDS promoted local protests and sit-ins, and at the end of November the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, which had been working to end the Cold War since the days of McCarthyism in the 1950s, organized a march of 25,000 people in Washington.

None of these protests affected the government's conduct of the Vietnam War but through this period and into 1966 they nurtured the anti-war spirit. In 1966, the young on the campuses and the veteran peace activists from groups such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Catholic Workers and the Quakers were joined in protest and dissent by a growing number of establishment politicians and journalists. Robert Kennedy, now Junior Senator from New York, said in a speech that continued bombing raids on North Vietnam "may become the first in a series of steps on a road from which there is no turning back - a road that leads to catastrophe for all mankind." Senator Fulbright, who had maneuvered the Tonkin Gulf Resolution through the Senate, joined persistent war critic Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon by holding nationally televised Foreign Relations Committee hearings on the war policy. In April, Fulbright, lecturing at Johns Hopkins University, said that the United States was "in danger of losing its perspective on what exactly is within the realm of its power and what is beyond it." He maintained that by displaying an "arrogance of power" the country was not "living up to our capacity and promise as a civilized example for the world." Another new critic was the influential journalist Walter Lippman, who grew disenchanted with Johnson and his previous assurances that the war would not be escalated. He wrote that the President had

> never defined our national purpose except in the vaguest, most ambiguous generalities about aggression and freedom... . Gestures, propaganda, public relations, and bombing and more bombing will not work.

Lippman also predicted the domestic turmoil that would result as "casualties and costs increase, and the attainment of our aims and the end of the fighting continue to elude us."

Johnson responded to his critics by labeling them "nervous Nellies" who did not have the courage to continue on to victory. But the tide had turned against him, even though it was not yet strongly evident. Even while the dissenting student groups were condemned as radical and the United States Attorney General included SDS among groups under investigation, a "dump Johnson" movement was underway. Led by anti-war liberal Allard Lowenstein, the movement recruited students nationwide, along with many others of moderate, liberal and radical views. By 1967, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Yale Chaplain William Sloane Coffin, and most notably Martin Luther King, Jr., had become leaders in the anti-war movement. The dump Johnson movement coalesced in the 1968 Presidential primaries around the candidacy of Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy. Robert Kennedy also declared his candidacy. By the time of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Lyndon Johnson had withdrawn as a candidate and Kennedy and King had both been assassinated. War protestors were in the streets and Johnson had been dumped, but, as the election revealed, his policies had not been dumped along with him. Hubert Humphrey became the Democratic candidate, burdened by his public support of Johnson as Vice President in spite of his personal and private dissent. Richard Nixon won the election. The country endured four more years of war in Vietnam.

At this point in our series of fateful decisions, we can begin to identify recurring elements as well as those that appear to be unique to a particular decision. For example, the personal character of Lyndon Johnson, the manner in which he was driven by his predetermined goals, his pride and ego mingled with self-doubt, and the way in which he related to his associates and his adversaries, have been cited by scholars and journalists alike as uniquely defining factors in the conduct of the Vietnam War during his administration. But the quality of presidential leadership and the role played in decision-making by the President's advisors is a constant factor throughout all the decisions. In addition, while some military leaders consistently called for accelerated military action, increased troops and combat commitments, others were among the strongest voices resisting escalation and pointing out the fallacies in predictions of military victory. President Eisenhower combined presidential and military restraint.

As we move from one decision to the next, we can also see a shift from reasoning along ideological lines to reasoning influenced by more overtly political concerns. Political concerns have never been absent from the decision-making process, however. Truman was concerned about preserving Democratic party control in the face of accusations about softness on Communism in China and the "loss" of that country to what was presented as the enemy. Eisenhower, although a Republican, still had to guard against that political concern in the days of McCarthyism.

As we witness the growing public dissent to the Vietnam War in the Johnson administration, we can raise issues and questions related to the government's reliance on secrecy in its actions and the role of public opinion in determining government policy. Although public mistrust of government credibility with respect to Vietnam first became a central issue during Johnson's presidency, secret military operations lacking public or Congressional affirmation had been the norm at least since the Eisenhower administration. When John Kennedy assumed office, he inherited ongoing secret operations directed against both Laos and North Vietnam. He himself went on to collude in a "shadow war" in Indochina. Concern with public opinion, and a demonstrably accurate belief that there was no public consensus for involvement in a long, deadly war, were major elements in each of the decisions so far. Why then was secrecy imposed to pursue policies contradicting public choices expressed through democratic electoral processes? Both Eisenhower and Johnson, for example, were elected specifically as peace candidates. Were these policies driven by the "spectre of Communism" which presumably haunted postwar America in the 20th century as Karl Marx asserted that it haunted Europe in the 19th? Was it correct to believe, as so many American politicians, economists and writers maintained during this period, that communism and capitalism could not co-exist or peacefully compete? Was the fear of communism, however justified, exploited for domestic political purposes to a degree that undermined or distorted the process of decision making we are examining?

SUGGESTED STUDENT READINGS
(See Appendix A)

The Tonkin Gulf Resolution, 1964, and the "The Blank Check."

From Porter, Ed., Vietnam, v. 2:
- Document 194, Lao Dong Party Study Document for Political Reorientation, March 5, 1965.
- Document 195, Telegram from Taylor to Rusk, March 18, 1965.
- Document 196, National Security Memorandum No. 328, April 6, 1965.
- Document 203, CIA Memorandum, "Reactions to a Further Buildup in South Vietnam, June 10, 1965.
- Document 204, Message from Westmoreland to Sharp, June 14, 1965.
- Document 205, Memorandum for the President from McGeorge Bundy, June 19, 1965.
- Document 207, Memorandum for the President by McNamara, July 20, 1965.
- Document 210, Chinese Newspapers, Jen-Min, H'h Pao, and Hung Chi. Editorial, November 11, 1965.

The Deliberative Process at Work? The questioning of George Ball by President Johnson in a chapter on "The Advisory Process at Work" from Berman, Planning a Tragedy.

"I Want the Killing to Stop," Lyndon Baines Johnson, from James Shokoff, Editor, The Voices of War, New York, 1972.

George Wald's "A Generation in Search of a Future," Ibid.

SDS States Opposition to the War, 1965.

SUGGESTED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Karnow, Ch. 10, 11

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. In this activity students are asked to diagram the decision-making process carried out by the Johnson administration in 1965 by listing each proposed alternative and identifying the final outcome. In the course of doing this, they should evaluate the evidence used to substantiate each proposed alternative. The class should develop a graph illustrating the decision-making process, perhaps in a diagram such as this: Alternative
   Alternative Decision
   Alternative

   For purposes of evaluating each of the alternatives, the class should develop a three-column illustration, such as this:

Alternative	Evidence	Validity of Evidence
1.		
2.		
3., etc.		

The students are then to analyze the effect of the final decisions from the American, North Vietnamese and Chinese points of view. For the Johnson administration perspective, refer to The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, the excerpt from Berman, and Documents 195, 196, 197, 203, 204, 207. Johnson's speech, "I Want the Killing to Stop" and Wald's "A Generation in Search of a Future" are also relevant although somewhat later in time. For the North Vietnamese point of view, use Document 194 and for the Chinese, Document 210. This activity can also be carried out by selecting from among the Johnson administration selections instead of using all of them, or by using the Berman excerpt to indicate the administration decision-making process.

Finally, based on reference to all three perspectives, students should try to choose an effective course of action on the part of the administration that would avoid the decision to resort to American combat troops.

Activities 2 and 3 are based on the essay, "Decisions on Vietnam: The Moral Perspectives" by Sheri Smith. As preparation for these activities, students should be familiar with the essay, which was written especially for inclusion in this curriculum guide. If possible, students should read the essay and a class discussion be held on it. As an alternative, the teacher may present a lesson on the essay, preferably accompanied by a handout summarizing or listing the major points in the sections, "What are the Moral Perspectives?", "Applying the Perspectives of Morality", and "What are the Moral Issues?". The lesson should emphasize discussion of the merits of the two fundamental moral viewpoints.

Students will need to know the steps described in "Applying the Perspectives of Morality" to conduct the following activities.

2. Divide the class into three groups to consider the issue posed in Decision 4, whether to deploy combat troops in Vietnam, in effect changing the status of the war by overtly "Americanizing" it. One group should consider the issue from the strategically-oriented perspectives presented in the decision narrative and in the reading selection from "The Advisory Process at Work". A second group should base its considerations on the consequentialist moral theory, and the third on the theory using the intrinsic character of an action to determine right and wrong.

   In their deliberations, the groups should follow the steps listed in "Applying the Perspectives of Morality". A spokesperson chosen by each group should present its decision. The class should then hold a general discussion analyzing the decision-making process and comparing its results in each group.

3. Again basing the analysis on the two moral theories used in Activity 2, have students develop positions on dissent from the United States Vietnam War policy of 1965. As further background, assign the readings, "I Want the Killing to Stop", "A Generation in Search of a Future", and "SDS States Opposition to the War".

a) Hold a class discussion on the issue, including questions such as:
   - Is dissent against a war in which your country is fighting unpatriotic?
   - Do citizens have a duty to protest actions of their government which they consider unjust?
   - What actions are acceptable in registering dissent? (Some examples from the Vietnam War period include writing letters to the newspaper, signing petitions, refusing to serve in the military, withholding payment of taxes, protest marches, the teach-ins, takeover of buildings in universities, sit-ins, and counseling draft resisters. There was also, in the later stages of the war, violence and destruction of property by a radical minority of anti-war groups.)

b) Have the students complete a written assignment stating their own moral position on citizen rights and responsibilities with respect to dissent, in answer to the question posed in the "Decisions on Vietnam" essay, "What should individuals do if they believe their government's policies are unjust?".

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TEACHER REFERENCES

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FATEFUL DECISION 5 : THE MINING OF HAIPHONG HARBOR

CHRONOLOGY

1971:

Jan 1	Congress forbids the use of U.S. ground troops in either Laos or Cambodia.
Feb	South Vietnamese begin raids into Laos to neutralize Ho Chi Minh.
Mar 6-24	ARVN forces invade Laos to stop enemy supply routes along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Communist counterattacks drive the invaders out of Laos and inflict heavy casualties.
Mar 29	Lt. Calley convicted for Mylai massacre.
Apr 19-23	Vietnam Veterans Against the War stage a demonstration in Washington, DC. It ends with veterans throwing combat ribbons and medals at the Capitol steps.
Apr 20	Pentagon reports that fragging incidents are on the increase. 1969-96; 1970-209.
Jun 13	New York Times begins to publish Pentagon Papers.
Jul 1	The 26th Amendment to the Constitution, granting the vote to 18-21 years old, is ratified.
Jul 15	Announcement of Nixon's trip to China.
Jul 17	John Ehrlichman, Nixon's Chief of Staff, begins investigation of Daniel Ellsberg, who made Pentagon Papers public.
Oct 3	Theiu re-elected President of South Vietnam.
Dec	American troop strength down to 140,000 men; as the Americans withdraw, the communists intensify their attacks in Laos, Cambodia, and parts of South Vietnam. U.S. troop morale continues to deteriorate. Vietnamization is not working, and the Paris Talks remained stalled.

1972:

Jan 25	Nixon announcement concerning Kissinger's secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese.
Feb 21	President Nixon makes his historic visit to China. The North Vietnamese fear that China and the United States will make a deal behind their backs; Taiwan calls for peace in Vietnam.
Mar 30	North Vietnamese start offensive across the DMZ.
Apr 8	Communists open a second front with a drive into Binh Long Province about 70 miles north of Saigon. Communist forces open a third front with drives into the central highlands.
Apr 10	America responds with B-52 air attacks in North Vietnam.
Apr 15	Nixon authorizes bombing of area near Hanoi and Haiphong.
May 1	North Vietnamese capture city of Quangtri.
May 8	Nixon announces mining of Haiphong Harbor; intensification of American bombing.
May 20	Moscow conferences between Nixon and Brezhnev. Both sides are unwilling to risk detente over the Vietnam war. Nixon's Soviet visit is the first ever by a U.S. President.
Jun 17	First arrests for break-in into Democratic National Committee offices at Watergate Complex in Washington, DC.
Jun 28	Nixon announces no more draftees will be sent to Vietnam unless they volunteer.

Aug 1	Kissinger meets with Le Duc Tho in Paris.
Aug 11	The last U.S. combat unit is withdrawn from South Vietnam. There are now 44,000 American servicemen in South Vietnam.
Aug 16	U.S. aircraft fly a record 370 sorties against North Vietnam. Most American aircraft fly from carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin or from bases in Thailand.
Mid Aug	Kissinger goes to Saigon; meets with resistance from President Thieu.
Sep 15	ARVN forces recapture Quang Tri City. The fighting destroys most of the city, which formerly had a population of 300,000. Most of these people now reside in squalid refugee camps.
Oct 4	Thieu meets with Alexander Haig; opposes draft agreement to end war.
Oct 8	Breakthrough in agreement between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.
Mid-Oct	Thieu opposes agreement in meeting with Kissinger.
Mid-Oct	Hanoi begins to broadcast details of agreement to pressure Kissinger into signing agreement.
Nov 7	Nixon re-elected on campaign promise of "peace with honor".
Nov 11	U.S. Army turns over its headquarters at Long Binh to the South Vietnamese Army symbolizing the end of American involvement in South Vietnam's war.
Nov 20	Kissinger again meets with Le Duc Tho; brings amendments wanted by Thieu.
Dec 14	New talks between Kissinger and Thieu break down.
Dec 18-31	Nixon orders "Christmas bombings" of Hanoi and Haiphong to force North Vietnamese back to the table. After 11 days of bombings, communists agree to resume talks when bombing ends.
Dec 28	Hanoi announces that it is willing to resume negotiations if the United States will stop bombing above the 20th Parallel. The bombing ends on December 31.
Dec 31	24,000 U.S. troops remain in South Vietnam; 312 killed in action.

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS

Vietnamese

Bui Diem
Le Duc Tho
Nguyen Van Thieu
Pham Van Dong
Vo Nguyen Giap
Xuan Thuy

Americans

Dean Acheson
Spiro Agnew
Ellsworth Bunker
Clark Clifford
Gerald Ford
Averill Harriman
Hubert Humphrey
Henry Kissinger
Melvin Laird
Robert McNamara
Richard M. Nixon

Others

Mao Zedong
Zhou Enlai

FATEFUL DECISION 5, MINING OF HAIPHONG HARBOR

U.S. President: Richard M. Nixon   Time: 1972

Richard Nixon was elected President in 1968, promising an early resolution in Vietnam. But Nixon, like Lyndon Johnson, found himself increasingly isolated in the White House by rising tides of anti-war public opinion as his efforts to end the fighting in Vietnam dragged on without definitive success throughout most of his first term in office.

1968 was a crucial and tragic year in American history. Johnson's policies, seeking victory in Vietnam by committing more than a half million American troops to the battle there and maintaining massive bombing of North Vietnam, were clearly ineffective in overcoming Vietcong and North Vietnamese resolve. On January 31, the Vietcong launched the series of attacks known as the Tet Offensive against over a hundred South Vietnamese cities and towns, including Saigon. Although they did not achieve their major goal of igniting general uprisings against the government in the south, and suffered terrible casualties decimating their prime forces for a period of years, the Vietcong demonstrated that they were able to attack cities as well as dominate the rural areas of South Vietnam. A major effect of this offensive was a sudden and dramatic decline in support of the war among the American public. In spite of rising protests and rising casualties among American troops, that support had declined only moderately, hovering around a fifty-five/forty-four percent split between those who favored a tougher policy to achieve victory and those who advocated withdrawal. After Tet public support for Johnson's Vietnam policy fell to twenty-six percent, reflected in an outpouring of public criticism by influential clergy, business leaders, educators and the media. In Stanley Karnow's words, these previous presidential supporters now characterized the war as a "futile conflict, which threatened to divide and torment the nation internally as well as dissipate its global assets...".

By midwinter, most of Johnson's advisors, including formerly enthusiastic supporters of military escalation, had also lost hope in the military options. McGeorge Bundy, George Ball and Bill Moyers had resigned. When Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, champion of American know-how, publicly revealed his disillusionment with the failure of the bombing at Senate Armed Services Committee hearings in 1967, Johnson replaced him with Clark Clifford. In truth, as McNamara said, bombing North Vietnam had not prevented supplies from reaching South Vietnam, it had not damaged the agrarian economy of North Vietnam, and it would not induce the North Vietnamese leaders to negotiate. But the Senate hearings had been orchestrated by Mississippi Senator John Stennis to demonstrate that planning had been done by "unskilled civilian amateurs" in such a way as to "shackle the professional military experts." With the mood of many Americans still expressed by a popular bumper sticker reading, "Win or Get Out", Johnson chose to keep trying to win and, after the 1967 hearings, eased previous restrictions to permit an extension of targets to sites within the city perimeters of Hanoi and Haiphong. The mining of Haiphong Harbor was also considered, as it originally had been in 1963 and again after the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, but was rejected.

By 1968, even before the shock of Tet, street protests against the war were increasing. With almost half a million troops in Vietnam as the year opened, 15,000 had died since the first combat troops landed in 1965. A million and a half tons of bombs had been dropped on Vietnam, more than fell on Europe in all of World War II. In spite of all this, the war was deadlocked. President Johnson was beleaguered by forces on the right pushing for further escalation; frustrated by the growing, highly-vocal, anti-war movement; and the target of attempts within his own party to recruit candidates to run against him in the 1968 Presidential primaries.

In the New Hampshire primary, Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy almost defeated Johnson, running on a peace platform. Shortly thereafter, Robert Kennedy announced his candidacy on the same issue. In late March, a group of Johnson's trusted advisors, dubbed the "Wise Men", met with him to recommend "a sweeping re-evaluation of America's whole policy toward Vietnam". This move was led by Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford, whose previous support of Johnson's policies had already been eroded by events when he assumed his office on March 1. Johnson was finally persuaded by his advisors' almost unanimous stance against the war. He conceded to Dean Acheson's telling point that the Saigon regime did not have the people's support in South Vietnam and the Johnson administration did not have the American people's support for the war. Acheson, who had originally influenced Truman to support the French, now said, "...we're trying to...force the enemy to sue for peace. It won't happen - at least not in any time the American people will permit." These were not new insights, having been advanced by dissenters to escalation since the late 1940s. But even though their truth was now inescapable, neither Johnson nor Nixon was able or willing to dismantle the structure of motivation and justification that had exacted such a price during the years of build-up and commitment to the goal of victory.

On March 31, 1968, Johnson announced in a speech that he was restricting United States air strikes to an area south of the twentieth parallel, and that he was authorizing the opening of negotiations with the communists - points agreed on with his advisors. He also, on his own private decision, withdrew his candidacy for another term as President. The offer to negotiate was accepted, and in mid-May talks began in Paris between an American delegation headed by Averill Harriman and a North Vietnamese group headed by Xuan Thuy. These talks did not progress. It took another five years to reach a truce agreement. The number of Americans killed in Vietnam during that period exceeded the total of previous deaths, and the country was rent by internal dissent and strife.

Some of that strife took place before the 1968 election. On April 4, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, generating a series of riots. Dr. King had become a leader in the anti-war movement, stressing his concerns that the civil rights and economic programs comprising Johnson's domestic Great Society were being lost in the use of national resources for the Vietnam War. He also deplored the death and suffering on all sides. On June 5, Robert Kennedy was assassinated in Los Angeles after winning the California Democratic primary. At the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in July, Vice President Hubert Humphrey was nominated to a background of riots outside the convention hall as hordes of young anti-war protesters were chased, tear-gassed and beaten by Chicago police.

Richard Nixon benefited from the disarray of the Democratic Party in eking out a narrow win over Humphrey, saddled with his public loyalty to Johnson until too late in the campaign to establish his own anti-war position. Nixon promised to "end the war and win the peace" and was purported to have a "secret plan" to do so.

Nixon relinquished the idea of a military victory in Vietnam, but, no less than Johnson, he was determined not to be "the first President of the United States to lose a war." He planned to frighten the North Vietnamese into submission by convincing them that he was willing to annihilate them if they did not negotiate a quick peace. President Eisenhower had done much the same thing in Korea when peace talks bogged down, hinting that he would use atomic weapons. As Nixon explained it to H.R. Haldeman, White House Chief of Staff and a close associate,

> I call it the Madman Theory, Bob. I want the North Vietnamese to believe that I've reached the point where I might do anything to stop the war. We'll just slip the word to them that, "For God's sake, you know Nixon is obsessed about Communists. We can't restrain him when he's angry - and he has his hand on the nuclear button" - and Ho Chi Minh himself will be in Paris in two days begging for peace.

In addition to setting himself up as a madman, Nixon at various times during his first term considered approaching the Soviet Union or even China to intercede with North Vietnam. He was above all interested in emphasizing foreign policy in his administration, and he made a crucial, although impulsive, choice of Henry Kissinger as the diplomatic strategist to translate his ideas into reality. Kissinger, a teenage refugee with his family from Nazi Germany in 1938, was at forty-five a brilliant and ambitious Harvard academician who had made a career in government, most notably as an advisor to New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller. He had looked down on Nixon as an anti-communist fanatic, but he readily accepted the call to the corridors of power as National Security Advisor. In his own words to an interviewer, "What interests me is what you can do with power."

Nixon and Kissinger were united in the opinion that foreign affairs should be conducted from the White House. Nixon directed Kissinger to "revitalize" the National Security Council and select its members. They developed a decision-making structure putting Kissinger in charge of a number of committees through which he controlled recommendations to the President. This arrangement limited the influence of the State Department, the Defense Department, the Pentagon and the CIA, and has been referred to as "a seizure of power unprecedented in modern American foreign policy".

Nixon's Vietnam policy included a return to the strategy of bombing North Vietnam. It was clear to him that the effectiveness of this strategy depended on the South Vietnamese army's ability to hold territory. He also knew that the government of South Vietnamese President Thieu was weak, fragmented, and could fall at any time. The air war against North Vietnam, suspended by President Johnson on October 31, 1968, was restarted in earnest in April 1972. In the face of North Vietnamese offensives reaching to within eighty miles of Saigon, Operation Linebacker I, as it was called, was designed first to warn the North Vietnamese that Americans would retaliate north of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) if the offensive continued; second, to cut North Vietnamese transportation and supply lines to the south; and third, to destroy stockpiles of food, military supplies and equipment.

These were familiar goals for the bombing, and had not been successful earlier. Nixon, therefore, reconsidered the mining of Haiphong Harbor, a step that he finally implemented in 1972 as his first term was drawing to a close without marked success in the ongoing peace negotiations with North Vietnam. Before he reached that final decision, however, he employed other strategies. He initially instituted a policy of "Vietnamization", phased withdrawal of American ground troops. He authorized secret negotiations outside Paris between Kissinger and North Vietnamese envoy Le Duc Tho. He explored attempts to preserve South Vietnam as an independent entity - his primary objective - by trying to isolate North Vietnam from its major supporters, the Soviet Union and China. The President favored the "linkage" concept originally developed by Kissinger, in which American concessions to achieve detente would require Soviet and Chinese pressure on North Vietnam to end the war. Kissinger, trying his best to negotiate an arms control summit between the United States and the USSR, resisted applying linkage in this instance. Primarily concerned with the international balance of power, he was willing to accept an armistice in Vietnam that would not necessarily guarantee South Vietnam's long-term survival. In contrast, Nixon wanted to achieve a durable peace agreement that, while not constituting victory, would at least prevent an appearance of defeat. He had proposed a mutual withdrawal from South Vietnam of American and North Vietnamese forces. Kissinger was willing to forego this proposal, clearly unacceptable to the North Vietnamese, and hinted as much to the Soviets on a secret mission to Moscow to discuss the arms summit.

In addition to bombing North Vietnam, instituting Vietnamization and proposing linkage to the Soviets, Nixon had also secretly expanded the war into Cambodia in March 1969 by bombing areas considered sanctuaries for the North Vietnamese. In the spring of 1970, American and South Vietnamese forces attacked supposed communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, and in 1971, South Vietnamese forces began incursions into Laos against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, along which North Vietnam sent supplies and troops. Public discovery of the bombing through the press, and Nixon's announcement of the Cambodian invasion, swelled anti-war protests. Two massive peaceful protests in the fall of 1969, known as "moratoriums" had restored to the anti-war movement much of the respect that it had lost in the streets of Chicago. Karnow describes the first moratorium, on October 15, in this way:

> A quarter of a million people converged on Washington, thousands of them following the widow of Martin Luther King, Jr., in a candlelight procession through the Capitol. Huge crowds assembled peaceably in New York, Boston, Miami, Detroit and other cities to listen to speakers ranging from familiar opponents of the war like David Dellinger and Dr. Benjamin Spock to former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg... .

President Nixon sought public support with a well-received speech asking for time to carry out his "plan to end the war", presented as a combination of Vietnamization, a willingness to compromise with the communists if they recognized the Saigon government, and the backup of "strong and effective measures" if they escalated their military actions. Vice President Spiro Agnew was assigned the lower ground of attacking the liberals and the news media as a "small and unelected elite" unrepresentative of America. However, a second moratorium on November 15 as even more successful than the first. During this time the public was learning about American actions in Vietnam, such as the massacre of civilians at Mylai village, which continued to raise serious moral questions about the nature and conduct of the war.

The invasion of Cambodia, publicly announced in a televised address by President Nixon on April 30, 1970, crystalized the unrest against the war stirred up by the secret bombings of Cambodia and Laos, the Mylai massacre, and the CIA-sponsored "Phoenix" operation in South Vietnam, in which U.S.-trained military, police and civilian officials of the Saigon government infiltrated peasant villages to identify and arrest or kill communist cadres. This latter operation resulted in many innocent deaths and was condemned as "mass murder" by the anti-war movement. Worse than the purposeful arrests and killings was the operation's degeneration into a quota exercise marked by payoffs and distortion of statistics on a "body count" basis. To fill the quotas, everyone killed in a skirmish was labeled Vietcong.

Campus protests proliferated, with students marching and attacking and occupying buildings. In a confrontation between national guardsmen and students at Kent State University in Ohio on May 4, 1970, the guardsmen shot into the crowd of protesters, killing four young people. This incident generated protests across the country. To quote Karnow's description,

> More than four hundred universities and colleges shut down as students and demonstrators staged strikes, and nearly a hundred thousand demonstrators marched on Washington, encircling the White House and other government buildings.

By March 1971, polls showed that support for Nixon's conduct of the war had dropped to thirty-four percent with fifty-one percent of Americans believing that the conflict was "morally wrong." Substantial withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam was proceeding, but morale among the remaining American troops in Vietnam was rapidly deteriorating. Drug addiction became a serious problem.

Friction among groups in a unit, including racial tensions, led to fights often started by men high on liquor and drugs. Officers were attacked by their men, some killed by "fragging", fragmentation grenade attacks. Meanwhile, military operations launched by the South Vietnamese army only illustrated its general ineptitude and reluctance to engage the enemy. In spite of years of training of its top officers by the Americans, they were not prepared to provide the kind of leadership needed. They were products of a system that rewarded loyalty over competence and promotion over victory. They avoided risks and looked to Saigon rather than to the field of battle.

Underlying all of the tactical and political maneuvering to end the war through Nixon's various plans were the ongoing secret meetings between Kissinger and North Vietnamese representative Le Duc Tho. These meetings began in February 1970 and were held concurrently with the also ongoing official Peace Conference in Paris. Although the United States had pledged to South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu that no agreement would be made without his approval, both Nixon and Kissinger welcomed the opportunity to strike a compromise with North Vietnam. The latter government hoped to estrange the United States from its Saigon ally and to gain through negotiation the goals that had been denied them by lack of a clear military victory. Kissinger was hampered by the growing domestic opposition to the war and a strong desire to find a solution before the 1972 elections. The North Vietnamese were not constrained by either of these obstacles. Le Duc Tho was adamant in rejecting the Nixon proposal of mutual withdrawal. There was clearly no way in which the North Vietnamese would leave the south, even if all American troops were withdrawn. In the fall of 1970, therefore, Nixon publicly proposed the "standstill ceasefire" idea, which was hailed in Congress but also turned down by the North Vietnamese, who were holding out for the replacement of the Thieu regime with a coalition government in Saigon favoring "peace, independence and democracy." Nixon himself backed away from the standstill offer soon after he made it.

Thus the "marathon dialogue" between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho continued. Karnow describes Le Duc Tho as "a professional revolutionary for whom negotiations were a form of protracted guerrilla warfare." There was constant haggling over details with no substantive progress., By early 1972, more than 400,000 soldiers had been withdrawn from Vietnam. American battle deaths were down to ten a week. At this point, Nixon revealed Kissinger's secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese. These negotiations were actually further troubled by the major withdrawals, and the loss of American military power on the ground in Vietnam as a negotiating asset. It also seemed likely that troop withdrawals would lead to corresponding reductions in financial aid to South Vietnam, in the absence of pressure on Congress to vote for it on the rationale that our field troops needed support. At this juncture it appeared to Nixon and Kissinger that planned overtures to China and the Soviet Union might also offer paths to peace in Vietnam.

Truly dramatic changes were in the offing, as breakthroughs in United States relations with both China and the Soviet Union were explored. After complicated negotiations, Nixon made a trip to Beijing in February 1972. He and Kissinger discussed Vietnam with Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai without receiving any clear commitment. Nevertheless, the very presence of Nixon and Kissinger in China alarmed the North Vietnamese, who distrusted the Chinese with good cause since Zhou had undercut them at Geneva in 1954. The Chinese welcomed the United States, in part as a barrier to Soviet threats to their territory. The two nations had been rivals since the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis in the Kennedy administration.

The North Vietnamese and Vietcong launched a major offensive on March 30, 1972, in the midst of Nixon's approaches to China and the USSR. Nixon had warned Brezhnev that their scheduled late spring meeting might be cancelled if the North Vietnamese were allowed to begin an offensive "designed to humiliate us." The Soviets, in fact, had such limited control over Hanoi that Brezhnev could give only a vague response.

The North Vietnamese believed that "military success dictates diplomatic success", and hoped to advance their negotiating position with the Americans through a decisive victory. They also hoped to influence the American election campaign and to retain Soviet and Chinese support by demonstrating their strength. As with the Tet offensive, they accepted frightful casualties to achieve limited gains, again proving their willingness to sacrifice in order to win,

The successful communist effort reaffirmed Nixon's conviction that an unconditional American withdrawal from Vietnam "would doom the Saigon regime - and his own reputation." The day after the communist attack began, he put the "madman theory" into practice, ordering B-52s and other United States planes to bomb targets in North Vietnam. He also reopened plans to bomb Hanoi and mine Haiphong Harbor.

This was the point at which Nixon and Kissinger's views diverged. Kissinger was scheduled to make a secret trip to Moscow in April to arrange the Nixon-Brezhnev meeting. While instructed to "hang tough" and invoke linkage, Kissinger on his own initiative went beyond discussions on Vietnam to arms control, satisfying himself that Brezhnev wanted a summit meeting "at almost any cost." He also implied an American willingness to concede on the "mutual withdrawal" proposal previously reimposed by Nixon. He returned to Washington to find the President exclusively occupied with Vietnam. Even though Kissinger was due to resume talks with Le Duc Tho, Nixon had determined to bomb Hanoi and Haiphong on May 5, three days after the beginning of those talks. By May 8, he had decided to mine Haiphong Harbor and to announce his decision in advance of the action that night.

There was predictable dissension among Nixon's advisors about both the extended bombing attacks and the decision to mine the harbor. Kissinger opposed anything that would lead to a break in the newly-developing relations with the Soviet Union and China. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird reiterated his belief that American action should be concentrated on South Vietnam and Vietnamization. CIA Director Richard Helms reminded the

President that his agency's reports indicated that these actions would fail in their purpose. Both Vice President Spiro Agnew and Secretary of the Treasury John Connally supported Nixon and urged him to go ahead with his plan of action. Nixon was already determined to do so, convinced that only a major show of American strength could bring about "peace with honor."

In his televised speech announcing the impending mining, however, Nixon took a moderate tone, offering the North Vietnamese an olive branch in the form of several proposals. These included United States withdrawal from Vietnam within four months of a ceasefire and release of American POWs; suggestions that the issue of reunification should be an internal settlement negotiated by the Vietnamese themselves; and a restatement of Kissinger's indirect offer to drop the mutual withdrawal qualification.

Reaction to the mining from the Soviet Union and China was surprisingly mild. They issued only routine disapproval statements, even though most of the twenty-seven freighters blocked in the harbor were Soviet. Clearly, the Soviet Union cared more about the proposed summit than the interests of the North Vietnamese, who once again felt betrayed by their Soviet and Chinese "allies". Nixon's popularity at home in the wake of this successful military and diplomatic coup soared to a sixty percent approval rating, convincing the North Vietnamese that he would easily win the 1972 Presidential election, depriving them of their hopes of dealing with anti-war Democrat George McGovern. With their own military offensive now played out, they returned to the verbal offensive at the bargaining table.

The North Vietnamese well realized the difference in their relative negotiating strength at this point in 1972 compared to that they enjoyed after defeating the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Yet, they had lost their advantage in 1954 because of Zhou Enlai's collusion with the French and the Soviets. Le Duc Tho moderated his previous demands, most particularly for the removal of South Vietnamese President Thieu, while the North Vietnamese consolidated their hold on the territories won in their offensive, most especially those in the Mekong Delta. Le Duc Tho now agreed with the American position that political and military issues could be settled separately. Assuming an American concern with reaching an agreement before the Presidential election, he offered "a very realistic and very simple proposal". The United States and North Vietnam would, between them, arrange a ceasefire, organize American troop withdrawal, prisoner exchanges and other military matters. Political problems would be left to the opposing Vietnamese sides. They would form an interim body, later known as the "council of national reconciliation", composed of Saigon government, communist and "neutral" representatives, to supervise eventual elections and theoretically achieve permanent peace. In the interval, as Karnow puts it,

> the Saigon regime and the Vietcong would continue as distinct entities, their respective armies remaining in the areas each controlled, the pattern as crazy as spots on a leopard.

Kissinger was elated and satisfied with this proposal, which met his globally-based concerns and assured an early American departure from Vietnam. His own aides pointed out the flaws, primarily the lack of any guarantee for the Saigon regime's safety and the acceptance of a continued presence of North Vietnamese troops in the south. These conditions portended a resumption of fighting between the two sides, even more likely because there was no guarantee that the Vietnamese would cooperate to form the council of reconciliation or take moves to assure a durable peace. In the event of a resumption of fighting, the communists held a decided military advantage because of the territory occupied in their offensive. Kissinger angrily rejected his aides' "nit-picking" as they scrutinized details of the agreement text. "You don't understand," he told them. "I want to meet their terms. I want to reach an agreement. I want to end this war before the election. It can be done, and it will be done."

Even so, it was not to be done quickly or smoothly. To reassure Thieu, who had been instructed to "seize as much territory as possible" in the Saigon region, massive shipments of military equipment were delivered to his government with the important proviso under the Paris agreement that they could be replaced. Among other advantages, this program, called Operation Enhance Plus, gave the Saigon regime the fourth largest air force in the world. In addition, United States military bases in South Vietnam were transferred to Saigon's ownership to prevent the necessity of observing a clause in the Paris agreement requiring that they be dismantled.

Despite these efforts and personal assurances from Kissinger of U.S. loyalty, South Vietnamese President Thieu almost managed to scuttle the agreement with demands for major amendments to the agreement and for the recognition of South Vietnam as a sovereign state. This would, in effect, nullify the communist struggle for reunification. The United States position in this regard was, as Karnow states, "...the supreme irony of the moment. After fighting for years to defend South Vietnam's independence, the United States was now denying its legitimacy." Ironically, Richard Nixon was Vice President when, during the Eisenhower administration, the decision was made to recognize Diem and the establishment of the South Vietnamese State in defiance of the 1954 Geneva Accords.

Now, however, Nixon was attempting to bring Thieu into line with threats to cut off aid. Hoping that Thieu would realize the weakness of his position and acquiesce in the agreement without further trouble, Nixon postponed signing the accord. This only led to a denunciation of the agreement by Thieu, compounded by a call for the destruction of all North Vietnamese troops in the south. The North Vietnamese countered by releasing a summary of the agreement along with the accusation that the United States was attempting to sabotage it. In late October, Kissinger stepped in to try to reassure the North Vietnamese of U.S. sincerity in support of the agreement and to convince Thieu that the administration was determined on a compromise. He announced in a televised press conference that

> We believe that peace is at hand... . We believe that an agreement is within sight.

These words, marking Kissinger's television debut, have since become both famous and highly criticized as leading to inflated expectations in the United States. Nixon was alarmed by what he considered a show of weakness toward the communists, but issued his own statement, leaving hope for a swift compromise in an agreement that still had "differences to be resolved." The American people obviously shared that hope, re-electing Nixon in a landslide.

Talks dragged on into December. On the thirteenth of that month, Le Duc Tho left to return to Hanoi for instructions. The talks once again appeared deadlocked. Nixon, who had instructed Kissinger to submit Thieu's demands to Le Duc Tho but also to complete the agreement by Inauguration Day on January 20, issued an ultimatum to North Vietnam to "begin talking seriously within seventy-two hours - or else." Even as both sides now issued statements to the effect that, as Kissinger put it, the settlement was "ninety-nine percent completed" and in the communist view, a "very small number" of technical difficulties remained, Nixon lost patience with words. Since the North Vietnamese cited "fundamental differences" remaining, without further ado he authorized Operation Linebacker II, which became known as the "Christmas Bombings". Nearly 3,000 missions were flown in eleven days beginning December 18 over the heavily populated area between Haiphong and Hanoi. On January 8, Le Duc Tho was back at the negotiating table. By the next day, their differences were resolved. Thieu had received a final ultimatum from Nixon to agree or be left to survive on his own. He gave in, recognizing that he could not, as he said, "allow myself the luxury" of holding out against America. The formal peace agreement was signed in Paris on January 27, 1973.

Nixon asserted that, "We have finally achieved peace with honor." Historians have questioned whether either was achieved, although years later President Ronald Reagan lauded the Vietnam War as a "noble cause". Some writers claim that the collapse of communism in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union prove the Vietnam War was justified and effective as part of the anti-communist struggle by the west.

The military initiatives undertaken in the Nixon administration, however, were not carried out in a struggle to contain world communism. They were intended to punish the North Vietnamese sufficiently to force them to negotiate an end to the war, and to deprive them of resources necessary to continue the war. The mining of Haiphong Harbor, particularly since the Chinese and Soviets acceded to it on the basis of their greater goals, effectively denied the North Vietnamese the ability to rely on military success. Without the resources and supplies their allies had been providing, North Vietnam replaced the battlefield with the battle of negotiation.

The peace agreement as finally signed was scarcely different in any detail from the draft offered in October. The Christmas bombing, while it may have hastened Le Duc Tho's return to Paris, did not result in the insertion of any provisions shoring up the South Vietnamese government or improving chances for a peaceful political solution to the issue of reunification. It served primarily as a reassurance to Thieu, and a warning to the North Vietnamese, that Nixon would "not hesitate to bomb North Vietnam again should the armistice break down. The 'madman theory' was no abstraction."

This fifth fateful decision is both related to and different from the earlier ones. The actions undertaken in 1972 - most specifically the mining of Haiphong Harbor - did not represent new or original ideas, since they had been considered in an earlier administration. The objective of the Nixon administration was decidedly different - not victory, but exit. To achieve this objective, President Nixon dramatically escalated the nature of United States military action when he ordered the mining of Haiphong Harbor. This step deprived North Vietnam of crucial military and other supplies from the Soviet Union and China, crippling its ability to continue the war. Similarly, the bombing around Hanoi included formerly off-limits military targets and was carried out by B-52 bombers with a capacity for inflicting destruction much greater than that of the aircraft used in the Johnson administration. Nixon demonstrated his intention to devastate North Vietnam militarily and economically in pursuit of his administration's goal of a settlement. His decision to mine and to bomb served his immediate purpose, but did not alter the final outcome of the war or further either the democratic or anti-communist goals originally proclaimed by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

The mining of Haiphong Harbor has been labeled a success because it accomplished the objective of bringing the North Vietnamese back into negotiations with positions sufficiently modified to produce the draft agreement proposed by Le Duc Tho in October 1972, and accepted by Kissinger as a basis for ending the war. As we have seen, this draft was in essence the same as the final agreement signed in January 1973, with the flaws cited by the President and by Kissinger's aides unaffected by the Christmas bombing. The agreement actually reverted to the "standstill ceasefire" proposal briefly offered and then denied by President Nixon in October 1970. The question has persisted over time, with considerable controversy, as to whether the two sides could have arrived at the same agreement then as they did two painful years later. Karnow believes that they could not, because neither side was then ready to compromise. Both were unwilling to deal from weakness, both continuing to seek an improved bargaining position through a stronger battlefield position. Yet in the end, the resolution in 1972 of the two major points dividing the sides in 1970 led to the agreement. The United States gave up its insistence on mutual withdrawal and the North Vietnamese dropped their demand for Thieu's resignation.

The peace settlement of 1973 provided only "an interlude" preceding "the beginning...of the third Indochina War", as Stanley Karnow predicted at the time. The Americans came home - troops and prisoners, the last American prisoners leaving Hanoi in March. The South Vietnamese army, a million men with American equipment, began retaking communist-conquered territory. But by late spring 1974, it was lost again. In 1975, the North Vietnamese and Vietcong mounted serious offensives culminating in their occupation of Saigon on April 30, and the reunification of Vietnam by military force along the same political lines that would have resulted from national elections in 1956, had they been permitted to take place then. Ho Chi Minh, who had died in 1969, did not survive the intervening twenty years of war to become his reunited country's President. Vietnamese and Americans totaling into the millions also failed to survive to the final resolution.

SUGGESTED STUDENT READINGS
(See Appendix A)

Henry A. Kissinger Reveals the U.S. Negotiating Position, 1972.
Negotiating Position of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, 1972.
From Porter, Ed., Vietnam:
- Document 303, News Conference by Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs, Henry Kissinger, January 26, 1972.
- Document 304, Communique Supplement on Talks Leading to Bombing Cessation, April 20, 1972.
- Document 305, Address to the Nation by Nixon, May 8, 1972.
- Document 306, News Conference of Kissinger, May 9, 1972.
- Document 307, News Conference of Special Advisor to the DRV Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks Le Duc Tho, in Paris, May 12, 1972.

SUGGESTED STUDENT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Karnow, Ch. 15, 16.
See also reference in Additional Teacher References to the article "The Impact of the Antiwar Movement" by Melvin Small.

SUGGESTED STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. This activity is designed to help students assess foreign policy objectives that nations assert publicly, and to compare those with underlying, less publicly-acknowledged goals.

   a) Students should understand the concepts of negotiation, compromise, national interest, national security and world politics with particular reference to the global role played by super powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union were at the time of the Cold War.

   b) Based on prior knowledge of the time period and American relations with major Southeastern Asian countries, students should list their assumptions of United States foreign policy objectives toward Vietnam. They should repeat the process with regard to North Vietnamese foreign policy. There should be a minimum of three objectives in each case.

   c) Students should then read:

      - Henry Kissinger Reveals the U.S. Negotiating Position, 1972.
      - Negotiating Position of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, 1972.
      - News Conference by Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger, January 26, 1972.

Based on this reading, compare the positions expressed with those previously listed by students. Questions can be raised as to:

- differences between public statements and actual domestic or international situations influencing their policies;
- presumed loyalties of allies;
- alternative approaches that might better serve their respective national interests.

d) Students can then develop an alternative position statement for each country reflecting this analysis.

2. This activity is designed to help students consider the merits of military force as an effective means to achieve negotiating goals.

a) Students should read Documents 304, 305, 306, 307.

b) Organize a debate or a panel discussion around the following: RESOLUTION: Let it be resolved: The use of military force is an effective means of forcing negotiations toward a determined goal.

The debate or panel discussion should initially revolve around the specific case of the mining of Haiphong Harbor, and the bombing of North Vietnam (the Christmas bombing). Students should consider the economic pressure included in damage caused by bombing and trade interruption caused by the mining. They should also consider the effect of the responses of the Soviet Union and China to the U.S. actions.

The discussion should then be expanded to allow consideration of current or recent events including efforts to negotiate a settlement of fighting among various contending groups in Bosnia, attempts to restore the elected government in Haiti, and the long-standing efforts to achieve peace settlements in the Middle East.

In preparation for this activity, or as a follow-up to it, students can be assigned research topics to find examples of similar uses of military power to achieve negotiating concessions.

SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL TEACHER REFERENCES

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Porter, Vietnam Documents, Vol II, Document 305, "Address to the Nation by Nixon." May 8, 1972.

Safire, William. Before the Fall. An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975.

Small, Melvin, "The Impact of the Antiwar Movement" reprinted in Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War, Documents and Essays edited by Robert J. McMahon, D.C. Heath and Company, p. 495-502. From Johnson, Nixon and the Doves, by Melvin Small, Rutgers University Press, 1988. (This essay was intended for inclusion in Appendix A, but we were unable to secure permission to reprint from the publisher except at a per page copyright fee beyond the limits of our grant budget. It is, however, a useful resource for those teachers able to find it in either of the references cited and could then be used as the basis of a lesson or adapted into an assignment.)

Stanton. Rise and Fall, p. 344-5.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

The following activities are general in nature, based upon summing up the theme of considering issues of war and peace and developing alternatives to war in international conflict.

1. In its curriculum, Lessons of the Vietnam War, the Center for Social Studies Education cites five reasons that leaders use to commit nations to war: the five "P"s of Power, Prestige, Principle, Profit and Protection.

    a) Conduct a class discussion on the nature and merits of the five Ps, and the ways in which they apply to the Vietnam War.

    b) Add two others Ps: Price, the cost of war in human lives, suffering, and the destruction of resources; and Public Opinion. Consider the Vietnam War and other wars in terms of what was achieved and at what price. Discuss the following question:

    > Is it possible to devise a measure for determining if going to war is justified, and/or to set the price we are willing to accept as the result? In the Vietnam War, for example, what price were the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong willing to accept in comparison with the Americans? To what degree did public opinion accept the price in each case?

2. Historically, the United States has avoided standing armies in peacetime as "inconsistent with the principles of republican government, dangerous to the liberties of a free people, and generally converted into destructive engines for establishing despotism." Those 18th century words of the Continental Congress in 1784 have been refuted in the 20th century as the Cold War led to the maintenance of a large United States military establishment spread around the globe in fulfillment of treaty obligations and in combat. During the same period, the power of the Executive Branch grew in comparison to that of Congress until it was the subject of a book called The Imperial Presidency. One of the President's most important roles during these years was that of Commander-inChief. We have seen how five presidents carried out that role in the Vietnam War. Reaction to that war led to changes in which the Congressional role has been reasserted over committing troops to combat and the press has become more forceful in questioning government policy in areas formerly considered sensitive for national security reasons. Currently, military forces are being reduced. In the light of this progression of events, ask students to consider any or all of the following:

    a) What lessons should be learned from the decisions and events of the Vietnam War that you have studied in this unit?

b) To what extent do you think they have been learned, citing more recent events to prove your point?

c) Can you identify elements in more recent U.S. military actions, such as those in the Persian Gulf or in Somalia, that are similar to any in the Vietnam War? Any that are different? What are the reasons for such similarities and differences?

d) What changes, if any, exist in the way President Clinton's administration approaches foreign policy decisions, especially with regard to international intervention with or without use of military power, in comparison to the administration of Vietnam War presidents? Are these changes for the better or the worse?

e) Is the United States in a different position as a world power today than it was in the 1960s and 1970s? If so, what are the differences and how should they affect United States policy?

DECISIONS ON VIETNAM: THE MORAL PERSPECTIVES

by Sheri Smith

The five fateful decisions which led to increasing American involvement in Vietnam, and ultimately to war, reveal circumstances and factors which often determine national actions. In retrospect, we are compelled to wonder whether those choices were wise or justified. Were these the right decisions? Strategically, the answer lies in determining whether they successfully furthered the policies of the United States. But that is not the only sense in which we may wonder whether these were the right decisions. Were these decisions, and policies they were intended to implement, justified from a moral point of view?

Some historians and statesmen deny that moral considerations are meaningful or even possible in the conduct of national affairs, particularly in matters of war. Does the language of morality have a place in these debates? Should we consider only strategy and national interests in evaluating the choices made? In fact, the persistent and significant issues of the Vietnam War are moral issues. They are questions about the moral responsibilities of democratic governments and their citizens, the rights of the people of other nations, and the comparative weight our national interests should be given when they conflict with these responsibilities and rights. Most importantly, they are questions about the moral basis for military interventions and about the conduct of the war in Vietnam. Any discussion of American involvement in the Vietnam War must address these issues.

What are the Moral Perspectives?

In any of these situations, how do we decide what ought to be done from the moral point of view? Traditional ethical theories, which are sets of moral principles and rules, provide a guide to determining which decisions are the right ones.

Two basic moral viewpoints have been advanced in the history of ethics. Each presents significantly different evidence to support its judgments about actions and policies. One traditional moral theory, consequentialism, is the view that the results of actions determine right and wrong. Whatever will produce the greatest possible good for the greatest number is the right thing to do. From this perspective, as an example, a decision to violate an agreement could be justified on moral grounds if that action would have better results than any other alternatives.

Rights or duties establish the basis for the second moral viewpoint, the theory that the moral character of actions determines right and wrong. Thus, actions such as telling the truth are intrinsically right and lying is wrong. The consequences of telling the truth or lying are irrelevant to judging right or wrong. From this perspective, violating an agreement could never be justified, even if that action would lead to good results, since breaking an agreement is always the wrong thing to do.

These two traditional moral viewpoints have recently been challenged by a perspective that focuses on the virtue and character of individuals, as Aristotle did, rather than judging their actions. This perspective suggests that we must consider moral virtue, defined as the character traits that make someone a good person, when we make decisions. We must ask, for example, "What kind of person will I be if I do this?"

Are the consequences of an action, the kind of action involved, or virtue, more important to consider when we make moral decisions? The answer to this question is critical because it determines the evidence that we will use to decide what ought to be done from the moral point of view. Each individual must find the answer through thoughtful reflection on the nature of morality itself.

Applying the Perspectives of Morality

Applying moral perspectives to decisions requires careful consideration of several aspects of a situation. These steps should be part of any process in which a decision must be made, whether the issues are moral, strategic or personal.

First, clear, reliable information is crucial to grasping the context which requires a decision. Any issues about what the facts are must be resolved, if possible.

Second, the problem must be clearly and accurately defined. Since comples situations may involve several issues, issues must be distinguished, identified clearly and addressed individually. The problems faced by Presidents in Vietnam, for example, often had strategic, legal and moral dimensions, which should have been clarified and addressed.

Third, as many alternative solutions as possible must be generated for each problematic situation. We must be creative in developing additional options to the obvious solutions to avoid a common source of poor decisions, overlooking alternative choices.

Fourth, when we have the facts straight, the problem has been clearly identified, and alternative solutions have been generated, the key step remains: What criteria or standard will be used to make a decision? What determines the best solution? Although we may not often reflect on this step in making decisions, it is critical. We cannot evaluate whatever choices we have before us until we decide what test the right answer must satisfy. For moral decisions, we must determine which standard of morality to apply: rights and duties, consequences, or virtues.

In any case, the standard that is used to make a decision will define the evidence to be considered in examining alternatives. For example, if we believe consequences are the most significant factor in making moral decisions, we need to predict the results of each alternative and weigh them to determine which choice is the right one. If the standard of moral duties is imposed instead, the question to raise is where our duties lie in the situation under consideration.

When this sort of thoughtful and systematic analysis is complete, one alternative solution should emerge as the one that is best supported by the evidence available. What remains is to resolve to do the right thing.

This kind of analysis can be applied to the issues raised by the five fateful decisions. The fourth decision, for example, raises several issues about deciding to go to war. To address these issues, we should first focus on the central question that had to be considered at the time: should we send combat troops to Vietnam? A careful understanding of the situation in Vietnam is essential to putting the issue into context. We should identify any alternatives to sending troops, choose a moral perspective, and analyze these alternatives on the basis of that moral point of view. Only then can we determine whether the decision as the right one.

Although it is most difficult, perplexing and even frustrating to evaluate the moral aspects of significant national decisions, it is essential. We must confront the moral dimensions of judgment such as the fateful decisions that led to war in Vietnam.

What are the Moral Issues?

For each decision, we have selected one general issue to consider from a moral perspective.

Decision 1: Issue: Neutrality vs. Involvement.

> Is colonialism a morally defensible policy? What would justify imposing foreign rule on the citizens of a country? In general, what moral basis is there for intervening in the affairs of another country? Do the rights of citizens to determine what their government will be preclude any intervention?
>
> What responsibilities do we, as a nation, have toward other countries? Are there special responsibilities toward the poor or vulnerable?
>
> What are the moral reasons for a policy of neutrality? Should the interests of the people be weighed in determining whether to intervene or remain uninvolved? When would a policy of neutrality be morally unacceptable in the face of events in another country?

Decision 2: Issue: Treaties and Accords.

> What are our obligations when we have agreed to abide by a treaty? Are treaties like promises? Are we ever justified in violating a treaty or breaking our agreements?
>
> Suppose we have agreed to support free elections that will establish a new foreign government. If we are fairly certain that the elections will install leaders whose policies, we feel, will ultimately threaten the interests and welfare of the citizens, should we withdraw our support?

Are we ever justified in supporting foreign leaders who are dictators, even if it serves our national interests?

Decision 3: Issue: Information vs. Security.

What information should Presidents share with the citizens of a democracy? When are they justified in keeping secrets from the public? What can justifiably be withheld on the grounds of national interests or national security?

Should our national leaders be truthful in their dealings with other countries, or is it sometimes acceptable for Presidents to be involved in deceptive practices?

What role should public debate play in decisions which establish a military role? Should citizens be permitted to overturn a decision to go to war, in a national referendum, for example? Is a war unjust if it is not supported by the majority?

Decision 4: Issue: Deciding to go to War.

Should we use our power to promote the establishment of democracies? Does the goal of limiting communist expansion justify the decision to send combat troops to Vietnam? How far should we go to avoid the establishment of a government we oppose? Should we intervene if we believe the imposition of that government will harm the people?

Should a decision to go to war be made without public debate (unless the urgency of the situation precludes debate)? Is a war conducted without Congressional declaration an unjust war? What should individuals do if they believe their government's policies are unjust? Should citizens have the right to decide not to support a war effort, through refusing to serve in combat forces or to pay taxes, for example? Is dissent in a democracy less acceptable or even immoral during wartime?

What justifies the decision to go to war? National interests? Agreements or treaties? Protecting others against aggression? Human rights?

Decision 5: Issue: The Conduct of War.

Are there limits to the conduct of war, or are all actions in war permissible? Should we consider the effect on noncombatants in evaluating the alternatives in the conduct of war? Is any action that will hasten negotiations and thus end the war justified? Are there moral limits to "following orders" from superiors?

Why Is a Moral Perspective Needed?

The policies and decisions of a democracy must always be subject to moral review and reflection to insure responsible national actions. It often appears easier to base decision making exclusively on seemingly clear cut strategic analysis. Without moral analysis, however, the process and the resulting decisions will be flawed.

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SDS States Opposition to the War, 1965

Students for a Democratic Society wishes to reiterate emphatically its intention to pursue its opposition to the war in Vietnam, undeterred by the diversionary tactics of the administration.

We feel that the war is immoral at its root, that it is fought alongside a regime with no claim to represent its people, and that it is foreclosing the hope of making America a truly democratic society.

The commitment of SDS, and of the whole generation we represent, is clear: we are anxious to build villages; we refuse to burn them. We are anxious to help and change our country; we refuse to destroy someone else's country. We are anxious to advance the cause of democracy; we do not believe that cause can be advanced by torture and terror.

We are fully prepared to volunteer for service to our country and to democracy. We volunteer to go into Watts to rebuild that neighborhood to be the kind of place that the people of Watts want it to be - and when we say "rebuild" we mean socially as well as physically. We volunteer to help the Peace Corps learn, as we have been learning in the slums and in Mississippi, how to energize the hungry and desperate and defeated of the world to make the big decisions. We volunteer to serve in hospitals and schools in the slums, in the Job Corps and VISTA, in the new Teacher Corps - and to do so in such a way as to strengthen democracy at its grass roots. And in order to make our volunteering possible, we propose to the President that all those Americans who seek so vigorously to build instead of burn be given their chance to do so. We propose to test the young people of America: if they had a free choice, would they want to burn and torture in Vietnam or to build a democracy at home and overseas? There is only one way to make the choice real: let us see what happens if service to democracy is made grounds for exemption from the military draft. I predict that almost every member of my generation would choose to build, not to burn; to teach, not to torture; to help, not to kill. And I am sure that the overwhelming majority of our brothers and cousins in the army in Vietnam, would make the same choice if they could - to serve and build, not kill and destroy... .

Until the President agrees to our proposal, we have only one choice: we do in conscience object, utterly and wholeheartedly, to this war; and we will encourage every member of our generation to object; and to file his objection through the Form 150 provided by the law for conscientious objection.

Henry A. Kissinger Reveals the U.S. Negotiating Position, 1972

As you remember from the many briefings that we have had on Viet-Nam, there has been no issue of greater concern to this administration than to end the war in Viet-Nam on a negotiated basis. We have done so because of what we felt the war was doing to us as a people and because we felt that it was essential that whatever differences that may have existed about how we entered the war and how we conducted the war, that we ended it in a way that showed that we had been fair, that we had been reasonable, and that all concerned people could support.

We have not approached these negotiations in order to score debating points. We have not conducted these negotiations in order to gain any domestic benefits. . . .

On the political evolution, our basic principle has been a principle we have been prepared to sign together with them, that we are not committed to any one political structure or government in South Viet-Nam. Our principle has been that we want a political evolution that gives the people of South Viet-Nam a genuine opportunity to express their preferences.

We have pointed out, in innumerable meetings, that we recognize that this is a tough problem. We have indicated with extraordinary repetitiveness, as those of you who have heard me will not challenge, with extraordinary repetitiveness, that we know that Vietnamese traditions are different and that we are prepared to listen to their version of what a free political process might be like.

We have searched our souls to try to come up with a proposal that seems free to us; and after all, the agreement by the existing government—to have a commission comprising the people that wish to overthrow them run, organize, and supervise the election, to put the election under international supervision, and to resign a month before the election—is not just a trivial proposal.

The North Vietnamese position has been that they want us to agree with them, first, on replacing the existing government and, secondly, on a structure in which the probability of their taking over is close to certainty.

They want us, in other words, to do in the political field the same thing that they are asking us to do in the military field, to negotiate the terms of the turnover to them, regardless of what the people may think. . . .

They have said that they want a government composed of people who stand for peace, neutrality, and independence. There is another magic word which eludes me at the moment. And Americans cannot object to this proposal. The only thing is, they are the only ones who know who stands for peace, neutrality, and independence.

Whenever in these negotiations we have said, "All right, you don't like Thieu. How about this fellow, or that fellow, or that fellow?" there is almost no one that we know who they believe stands for peace, neutrality, and independence.

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So I would like to express this to you. The issue is to us: We are prepared, in all conscience and in all seriousness, to negotiate with them immediately any scheme that any reasonable person can say leaves open the political future of South Viet-Nam to the people of South Viet-Nam, just as we are not prepared to withdraw without knowing anything at all of what is going to happen next. So we are not prepared to end this war by turning over the Government of South Viet-Nam as part of a political deal.

We are prepared to have a political process in which they can have a chance of winning, which is not loaded in any direction. We have given our views of what this political process might be. We are prepared to listen to their views of what that political process might be. And we said in both notes of last fall, notes that were not intended for publication, at a time when we were hoping to be able to step before you with an agreement, that we are prepared to listen to their points.

Now, there has been some question of, "Did they ask us to replace or overthrow"—or whatever the word is—"the existing government in South Viet-Nam?"

We have every interest in stepping before you with total honesty. They have asked two things of us:

One, an indirect overthrow of the government; that is to say, that we have to withdraw. The way they phrase it, we would have to withdraw all American equipment, even that which the South Vietnamese Army has. They have asked us to withdraw all equipment, all future military aid, all future economic aid; and the practical consequence of that proposal, while they are receiving close to $1 billion worth of foreign aid, would be the indirect overthrow of the Government of South Viet-Nam, something about which there can be no question.

But they have further asked us, and we do not want to be forced to prove it, to change the government directly, generously leaving the method to us, and, therefore, the President's statement was true and is supportable.

We have no interest in engaging in a debate with the North Vietnamese that would force any more of this record into the open. We do have an interest that the American public understand exactly what is at issue today.

Negotiating Position of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, 1972

The provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam solemnly declares as follows:

If a correct solution is to be found to the Vietnam problem, and a lasting peace ensured in Vietnam, the U.S. Government must meet the two following requirement:

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a curious circumstance. In September, 1967, or about a year and a half ago, we had a meeting of M.I.T. and Harvard people, including experts on these matters, to talk about whether anything could be done to block the Sentinel system—the deployment of ABMs. Everyone present thought them undesirable, but a few of the most knowledgeable persons took what seemed to be the practical view: 'Why fight about a dead issue? It has been decided, the funds have been appropriated. Let's go on from there.'

"Well, fortunately, it's not a dead issue.

"An ABM is a nuclear weapon. It takes a nuclear weapon to stop a nuclear weapon. And our concern must be with the whole issue of nuclear weapons.

"There is an entire semantics ready to deal with the sort of thing I am about to say. It involves such phrases as 'Those are the facts of life.' No—these are the facts of death. I don't accept them, and I advise you not to accept them. We are under repeated pressure to accept things that are presented to us as settled—decisions that have been made. Always there is the thought: Let's go on from there. But this time we don't see how to go on. We will have to stick with these issues.

"We are told that the United States and Russia, between them, by now have stockpiled nuclear weapons of approximately the explosive power of fifteen tons of TNT for every man, woman, and child on earth. And now it is suggested that we must make more. All very regrettable, of course, but 'those are the facts of life.' We really would like to disarm, but our new Secretary of Defense has made the ingenious proposal that now is the time to greatly increase our nuclear armaments, so that we can disarm from a position of strength.

"I think all of you know there is no adequate defense against massive nuclear attack. It is both easier and cheaper to circumvent any known nuclear-defense system than to provide it. It's all pretty crazy. At the very moment we talk of deploying ABMs, we are also building the MIRV, the weapon to circumvent ABMs.

"As far as I know, the most conservative estimates of the number of Americans who would be killed in a major nuclear attack, with everything working as well as can be hoped and all foreseeable precautions taken, run to about fifty million. We have become callous to gruesome statistics, and this seems at first to be only another gruesome statistic. You think, Bang!—and next morning, if you're still there, you read in the newspapers that fifty million people were killed.

"But that isn't the way it happens. When we killed close to two hundred thousand people with those first, little, old-fashioned uranium bombs that we dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, about the same number of persons were maimed, blinded, burned, poisoned, and otherwise doomed. A lot of them took a long time to die.

"That's the way it would be. Not a bang and a certain number of corpses to bury but a nation filled with millions of helpless, maimed, tortured, and doomed persons, and the survivors huddled with their families in shelters, with guns ready to fight off their neighbors trying to get some uncontaminated food and water.

"A few months ago, Senator Richard Russell, of Georgia, ended a speech in the Senate with the words 'If we have to start over again with another Adam and Eve, I want them to be Americans; and I want them on this continent and not in Europe.' That was a United States senator making a patriotic speech. Well, here is a Nobel laureate who thinks that those words are criminally insane.

"How real is the threat of full-scale nuclear war? I have my own very inexpert idea, but, realizing how little I know, and fearful that I may be a little paranoid on this subject, I take every opportunity to ask reputed experts. I asked that question of a distinguished professor of government at Harvard about a month ago. I asked him what sort of odds he would lay on the possibility of full-scale nuclear war within the foreseeable future. 'Oh,' he said comfortably, 'I think I can give you a pretty good answer to that question. I estimate the probability of full-scale nuclear war, provided that the situation remains about as it is now, at two per cent per year.' Anybody can do the simple calculation that shows that two percent per year means that the chance of having that full-scale nuclear war by 1990 is about one in three, and by 2000 it is about fifty-fifty.

"I think I know what is bothering the students. I think that what we are up against is a generation that is by no means sure that it has a future.

"I am growing old, and my future, so to speak, is already behind me. But there are those students of mine, who are in my mind always; and there are my children, the youngest of them now seven and nine, whose future is infinitely more precious to me than my own. So it isn't just their generation; it's mine, too. We're all in it together.

"Are we to have a chance to live? We don't ask for prosperity, or security. Only for a reasonable chance to live, to work out our destiny in peace and decency. Not to go down in history as the apocalyptic generation.

"And it isn't only nuclear war. Another overwhelming threat is in the population explosion. That has not yet even begun to come under control. There is every indication that the world population will double before the year 2000, and there is a widespread expectation of famine on an unprecedented scale in many parts of the world. The experts tend to differ only in their estimates of when those famines will begin. Some think by 1980; others think they can be staved off until 1990; very few expect that they will not occur by the year 2000.

"That is the problem. Unless we can be surer than we now are that this generation has a future, nothing else matters. It's not good enough to give it tender, loving care, to supply it with breakfast foods, to buy it expensive educations. Those things don't mean anything unless this generation has a future. And we're not sure that it does.

"I don't think that there are problems of youth, or student problems. All the real problems I know about are grown-up problems.

"Perhaps you will think me altogether absurd, or 'academic,' or hopelessly innocent—that is, until you think of the alternatives—if I say, as I do to you now: We have to get rid of those nuclear weapons. There is nothing worth having that can be obtained by nuclear war—nothing material or ideological—no tradition that it can defend. It is utterly self-defeating. Those atomic bombs represent an unusable weapon. The only use for an atomic bomb is to keep somebody else from using one. It can give us no protection—only the doubtful satisfaction of retaliation. Nuclear weapons offer us nothing but a balance of terror, and a balance of terror is still terror.

"We have to get rid of those atomic weapons, here and everywhere. We cannot live with them.

"I think we've reached a point of great decision, not just for our nation, not only for all humanity, but for life upon the earth. I tell my students, with a feeling of pride that I hope they will share, that the carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen that make up ninety-nine per cent of our living substance were cooked in the deep interiors of earlier generations of dying stars. Gathered up from the ends of the universe, over billions of years, eventually they came to form, in part, the substance of our sun, its planets, and ourselves. Three billion years ago, life arose upon the earth. It is the only life in the solar system.

"About two million years ago, man appeared. He has become the dominant species on the earth. All other living things, animal and plant, live by his sufferance. He is the custodian of life on earth, and in the solar system. It's a big responsibility.

"The thought that we're in competition with Russians or with Chinese is all a mistake, and trivial. We are one species, with a world to win. There's life all over this universe, but the only life in the solar system is on earth, and in the whole universe we are the only men.

"Our business is with life, not death. Our challenge is to give what account we can of what becomes of life in the solar system, this corner of the universe that is our home; and, most of all, what becomes of men—all men, of all nations, colors, and creeds. This has become one world, a world for all men. It is only such a world that can now offer us life, and the chance to go on."

a teacher, and at Harvard I have a class of about three hundred and fifty students—men and women—most of them freshmen and sophomores. Over these past few years, I have felt increasingly that something is terribly wrong—and this year ever so much more than last. Something has gone sour, in teaching and in learning. It's almost as though there were a widespread feeling that education has become irrelevant.

"A lecture is much more of a dialogue than many of you probably realize. As you lecture, you keep watching the faces, and information keeps coming back to you all the time. I began to feel, particularly this year, that I was missing much of what was coming back. I tried asking the students, but they didn't or couldn't help me very much

"But I think I know what's the matter. I think that this whole generation of students is beset with a profound uneasiness, and I don't think that they have yet quite defined its source. I think I understand the reasons for their uneasiness even better than they do. What is more, I share their uneasiness.

"What's bothering those students? Some of them tell you it's the Vietnam war. I think the Vietnam war is the most shameful episode in the whole of American history. The concept of war crimes is an American invention. We've committed many war crimes in Vietnam—but I'll tell you something interesting about that. We were committing war crimes in World War II, before the Nuremberg trials were held and the principle of war crimes was stated. The saturation bombing of German cities was a war crime. Dropping those atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was a war crime. If we had lost the war, it might have been *our* leaders who had to answer for such actions. I've gone through all that history lately, and I find that there's a gimmick in it. It isn't written out, but I think we established it by precedent. That gimmick is that if one can allege that one is repelling or retaliating for an aggression, after that everything goes.

"And, you see, we are living in a world in which all wars are wars of defense. All War Departments are now Defense Departments. This is all part of the doubletalk of our time. The aggressor is always on the other side. I suppose this is why our ex-Secretary of State Dean Rusk went to such pains to insist, as he still insists, that in Vietnam we are repelling an aggression. And if that's what we are doing—so runs the doctrine—everything goes. If the concept of war crimes is ever to mean anything, they will have to be defined.

as categories of *acts*, regardless of alleged provocation. But that isn't so now.

"I think we've lost that war, as a lot of other people think, too. The Vietnamese have a secret weapon. It's their willingness to die beyond our willingness to kill. In effect, they've been saying, You can kill us, but you'll have to kill a lot of us; you may have to kill all of us. And, thank heaven, we are not yet ready to do that.

"Yet we have come a long way toward it—far enough to sicken many Americans, far enough to sicken even our fighting men. Far enough so that our national symbols have gone sour. How many of you can sing about 'the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air' without thinking, Those are *our* bombs and *our* rockets, bursting over South Vietnamese villages? When those words were written, we were a people struggling for freedom against oppression. Now we are supporting open or thinly disguised military dictatorships all over the world, helping them to control and repress peoples struggling for their freedom.

"But that Vietnam war, shameful and terrible as it is, seems to me only an immediate incident in a much larger and more stubborn situation.

"Part of my trouble with students is that almost all the students I teach were born after World War II. Just after World War II, a series of new and abnormal procedures came into American life. We regarded them at the time as temporary aberrations. We thought we would get back to normal American life someday.

"But those procedures have stayed with us now for more than twenty years, and those students of mine have never known anything else. They think those things are normal. They think that we've always had a Pentagon, that we have always had a big Army, and that we have always had a draft. But those are all new things in American life, and I think that they are incompatible with what America meant before.

"How many of you realize that just before World War II the entire American Army, including the Air Corps, numbered a hundred and thirty-nine thousand men? Then World War II started, but we weren't yet in it, and, seeing that there was great trouble in the world, we doubled this Army to two hundred and sixty-eight thousand men. Then, in World War II, it got to be eight million. And then World War II came to an end and we prepared to go back to a peacetime Army, somewhat as the American Army had always been before. And, indeed, in 1950—you think about 1950, our international commitments, the Cold War, the Truman Doctrine, and all the rest of it—in 1950, we got down to six hundred thousand men.

"Now we have three and a half million men under arms: about six hundred thousand in Vietnam, about three hundred thousand more in 'support areas' elsewhere in the Pacific, about two hundred and fifty thousand in Germany. And there are a lot at home. Some months ago, we were told that three hundred thousand National Guardsmen and two hundred thousand reservists—so half a million men—had been specially trained for riot duty in the cities.

"I say the Vietnam war is just an immediate incident because as long as we keep that big an Army, it will always find things to do. If the Vietnam war stopped tomorrow, the chances are that with that big a military establishment we would be in another such adventure, abroad or at home, before you knew it.

"The thing to do about the draft is not to reform it but to get rid of it.

"A peacetime draft is the most un-American thing I know. All the time I was growing up, I was told about oppressive Central European countries and Russia, where young men were forced into the Army, and I was told what they did about it. They chopped off a finger, or shot off a couple of toes, or, better still, if they could manage it, they came to this country. And we understood that, and sympathized, and were glad to welcome them.

"Now, by present estimates, from four to six thousand Americans of draft age have left this country for Canada, two or three thousand more have gone to Europe, and it looks as though many more were preparing to emigrate.

"A bill to stop the draft was recently introduced in the Senate (S. 503), sponsored by a group of senators that runs the gamut from McGovern and Hatfield to Barry Goldwater. I hope it goes through. But I think that when we get rid of the draft we must also drastically cut back the size of the armed forces.

"Yet there is something ever so much bigger and more important than the draft. That bigger thing, of course, is the militarization of our country. Ex-President Eisenhower, in his farewell address, warned us of what he called the military-industrial complex. I am sad to say that we must begin to think of it now as the military-industrial-labor-union complex. What happened under the plea of the Cold War was not alone that we built up the first big peacetime Army in our history but that we institutionalized it. We built, I suppose, the biggest government building in our history to run it, and we institutionalized it.

"I don't think we can live with the present military establishment, and its eighty-billion-dollar-a-year budget, and keep America anything like the America we have known in the past. It is corrupting the life of the whole country. It is buying up everything in sight: industries, banks, investors, scientists—and lately it seems also to have bought up the labor unions.

"The Defense Department is always broke, but some of the things it does with that eighty billion dollars a year would make Buck Rogers envious. For example, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal, on the outskirts of Denver, was manufacturing a deadly nerve poison on such a scale that there was a problem of waste disposal. Nothing daunted, the people there dug a tunnel two miles deep under Denver, into which they have injected so much poisoned water that, beginning a couple of years ago, Denver has experienced a series of earth tremors of increasing severity. Now there is grave fear of a major earthquake. An interesting debate is in progress as to whether Denver will be safer if that lake of poisoned water is removed or is left in place.

"Perhaps you have read also of those six thousand sheep that suddenly died in Skull Valley, Utah, killed by another nerve poison —a strange and, I believe, still unexplained accident, since the nearest testing seems to have been thirty miles away.

"As for Vietnam, the expenditure of firepower there has been frightening. Some of you may still remember Khe Sanh, a hamlet just south of the Demilitarized Zone, where a force of United States Marines was beleaguered for a time. During that period, we dropped on the perimeter of Khe Sanh more explosives than fell on Japan throughout World War II, and more than fell on the whole of Europe during the years 1942 and 1943.

"One of the officers there was quoted as having said afterward, 'It looks like the world caught smallpox and died.'

"The only point of government is to safeguard and foster life. Our government has become preoccupied with death, with the business of killing and being killed. So-called defense now absorbs sixty per cent of the national budget, and about twelve per cent of the Gross National Product.

"A lively debate is beginning again on whether or not we should deploy antiballistic missles, the ABM. I don't have to talk about them—everyone else here is doing that. But I should like to mention rantine of the patient in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease. War is a contagion whether it be declared or undeclared. It can engulf states and peoples remote from the original scene of hostility."

The country heard him, but did not listen.

The country failed to back him in that trying hour. And then we saw what happened when the aggressors felt confident that they could win while we sat by.

That was what President Truman remembered in 1947 in Greece and Turkey. That is what he remembered during the blockade of Berlin and when the attack came in Korea.

That is what President Eisenhower remembered in 1954 when he laid before the Senate the SEATO treaty and during the crisis over Quemoy and Matsu.

That is what President John F. Kennedy remembered when in the face of Communist aggression in Laos and Vietnam he began to send American forces there as early as 1962.

Yes, we have learned over the past half-century that failure to meet aggression means war, not peace. In carrying out that policy we have taken casualties in Berlin and Korea and now in Vietnam. We have had 160,000 American casualties from World War II up until Vietnam. Now every morning I look at those casualty figures. I measure them not as statistics, but man by man. As of this morning we lost 1,705 Americans in Vietnam in the year 1966—1,705—but we lost 49,000 last year on our highways.

And I tell you that if we fail in frustrating this aggression the war that would surely come in Asia would produce casualties not in the 1700s but in the hundreds of thousands and perhaps in millions.

Your government, therefore, under your President, is determined to resist this aggression at the minimum cost to our people and to our allies and to the world.

I don't know what true men may be trying to influence and I do not seek to influence any tonight. But I do tell you here and now that we do not seek to enlarge this war, but we shall not run out on it!

America is determined to meet her commitments tonight because those commitments are right. As I said after a meeting yesterday with Ambassador Lodge just as he was returning to his post of duty, we shall continue to struggle against aggression and social misery in South Vietnam. We shall use our influence to help this young nation come together and move toward constitutional government. We shall seek an honorable peace.

Let those, though, who speak and write about Vietnam say clearly what other policy they would pursue, and let them weigh their words carefully—let them remember that tonight there are 300,000 young Americans—our own boys—out there somewhere in Southeast Asia on the land and on the sea, and in the air, they are there fighting to quarantine another aggressor, they are there fighting for the peace of the world, and let them remember that there are men on the other side who know well that their only hope for success in this aggression lies in a weakening of the fiber and the determination of the people of America.

And so long as I am President the policy of opposing aggression at minimum cost shall be continued!

I sent our ambassadors to more than forty countries. I wrote letters to nearly 120 in the world asking for assistance, asking for peace. My plea was well received in all the nations of the world except the two most concerned—Red China and North Vietnam. After thirty-seven long days, while our men in uniform waited and while our planes were grounded on my orders, while our ambassadors went from nation to nation, we finally were forced to the conclusion that the time had not yet arrived when the government of North Vietnam was willing or could even be persuaded to sit down at a peace table and try to reason these problems out.

Therefore, our arguments need to be more persuasive and our determinations need to be more convincing and more compelling than they have been. All I can say to you tonight is that the road ahead is going to be difficult.

There will be some Nervous Nellies and some who will become frustrated and bothered and break ranks under the strain. And some will turn on their leaders and on their country and on our own fighting men. There will be times of trial and tensions in the days ahead that will exact the best that is in all of us.

But I have not the slightest doubt that the courage and the dedication and the good sense of the wise American people will ultimately prevail. They will stand united until every boy is brought home safely, until the gallant people of South Vietnam have their own choice of their own government.

More than that, not just that one little country of 14 million people but more than a hundred other little countries stand tonight and watch and wait. If America's commitment is dishonored in South

Vietnam, it is dishonored in forty other alliances or more that we have made. So I leave you with the assurance that we love peace and we seek it every hour of every day.

Any person who wishes to test us can give us the time and the date and the place and he will find us occupying our peace chair at the negotiating table with any government who genuinely and who sincerely wants to talk instead of fight.

Perhaps my sentiments and my feelings are best expressed by the words of President Roosevelt when he prepared only a day or so before he died in 1945 this speech and he never had an opportunity to deliver it. He said: "We seek peace, enduring peace. More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginnings of all wars. Yes, an end to this brutal, inhuman and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments. . . ."

The men who fight for us out there tonight in Vietnam, they are trying to find a way to peace.

But they know, and I don't understand why we don't all recognize, that we can't get peace just for wishing for it. We must get on with the job, until these men can come marching home, some day when peace is secure—not only for the people of America, but peace is secure for peace-loving people everywhere in this world.

3. Notes and Comments from The New Yorker

GEORGE WALD'S "A GENERATION IN SEARCH OF A FUTURE"

On Tuesday, March 4th, in the Kresge Auditorium at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a group of scientists assembled, with students and others, to discuss the uses of scientific knowledge. There is nothing we might print in these columns that could be more urgent than the extemporaneous speech, made before that gathering by George Wald, professor of biology at Harvard and Nobel Prize winner, under the title "A Generation in Search of a Future." We therefore quote from it here at length:

"All of you know that in the last couple of years there has been student unrest; breaking at times into violence, in many parts of the world: in England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Japan, and, needless to say, many parts of this country. There has been a great deal of discussion as to what it all means. Perfectly clearly, it means something different in Mexico from what it does in France, and something different in France from what it does in Tokyo, and something different in Tokyo from what it does in this country. Yet, unless we are to assume that students have gone crazy all over the world, or that they have just decided that it's the thing to do, it must have some common meaning.

"I don't need to go so far afield to look for that meaning. I am

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GENERAL JOHNSON: No, sir, I don't think they will.

THE PRESIDENT: MacArthur didn't think they would come in either.

GENERAL JOHNSON: Yes, sir, but this is not comparable to Korea.

THE PRESIDENT: But China has plenty of divisions to move in, don't they?

GENERAL JOHNSON: Yes, they do.

THE PRESIDENT: Then what would we do?

GENERAL JOHNSON: If so, we have another ball game.

THE PRESIDENT: But I have to take into account they will.

GENERAL JOHNSON: I would increase the buildup near North Vietnam, and increase action in Korea.

THE PRESIDENT: If they move in thirty-one divisions, what does it take on our part?

MCNAMARA: Under favorable conditions they could sustain thirty-one divisions and assuming the Thais contributed forces, it would take 300,000 plus what we need to combat the VC.

THE PRESIDENT: *But remember they are going to write stories about this like they did in the Bay of Pigs. Stories about me and my advisors. That is why I want you to think carefully, very, very carefully about alternatives and plans.* Looking back on the Dominican Republic, General, would you have done anything differently?

GENERAL JOHNSON: I would have cleaned out part of the city and gone in, with the same numbers.

THE PRESIDENT: Aren't you concerned about Chinese forces moving into North Vietnam?

GENERAL JOHNSON: Sir, there is no evidence of forces, only teams involved in logistics. It could be they are investigating areas which they could control later.

THE PRESIDENT: What is your reaction to Ho's statement he is ready to fight for twenty years?

GENERAL JOHNSON: I believe it.

THE PRESIDENT: What would you describe as Ho's problems?

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GENERAL JOHNSON: His biggest problem is doubt about what our next move will be. He's walking a tightrope between the Reds and the Chicoms. Also, he is worrying about the loss of caches of arms in the South.

THE PRESIDENT: Are we killing civilians in these Viet Cong areas?

GENERAL WHEELER: Certain civilians accompanying the Viet Cong are being killed. It can't be helped.

STANLEY RESOR (SECRETARY OF THE ARMY): Of the three courses the one we should follow is the McNamara plan. We simply can't go back on our commitment. Our allies are watching carefully.

THE PRESIDENT: *Do all of you think the Congress and the people will go along with 600,000 people and billions of dollars being spent 10,000 miles away?*

RESOR: The Gallup poll shows people are basically behind our commitment.

THE PRESIDENT: But, if you make a commitment to jump off a building and you find out how high it is, you may want to withdraw that commitment. I judge though that the big problem is one of national security. Is that right? Well, then, what about our intelligence. How do they (the VC) know what we are doing before we do it? What about the B-52 raid; weren't the Viet Cong gone before we got there?

MCNAMARA: They get it from infiltration in the South Vietnamese forces.

THE PRESIDENT: Are we getting good intelligence out of the North?

MCNAMARA: Only reconnaissance and technical soundings, we have none from combat intelligence.

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As discussion continued, the President realized that American involvement in Vietnam would be long-termed. He was advised fron a variety of sources to seek a national public consensus that would recognize Vietnam as being vital to American security. He was also advised to definitively and publicly establish a U.S. goal of winning the fight against Communism in Vietnam, but the President's response was tempered by his need to focus the American people on his domestic reform package and his desire not to be known as a president that pushed the U.S. into a war it could not win.

LBJ's advisory group grew smaller as the time approached to make the final decision, though even it contained vocal opponents of escalation. However, those who preached escalation had the President's ear and no amount of dissent could be heard over their voices.

1. *I Want the Killing to Stop*

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

I do not genuinely believe that there's any single person anywhere in the world that wants peace as much as I want it. I want the killing to stop. I want us to join hands with others to do more in the fight against hunger and disease and ignorance. But we all know from hard-won experience that the road to peace is not the road of concession and retreat.

A lot of our friends tell us how troubled they are, and how frustrated they are. And we are troubled. And we are frustrated. And we are seeking a way out. And we are trying to find a solution.

As Commander in Chief, I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican. The men fighting in Vietnam are simply Americans. Our policy in Vietnam is a national policy. It sprang from every lesson that we've learned in this century.

We fought in the First World War and then we failed to build a system of collective security which could have prevented the Second World War.

Standing in this great city of Chicago, one of our greatest leaders ever to be produced in America, on October 5, 1937, Franklin D. Roosevelt said—and I quote him: "When an epidemic of physical disease starts to spread the community approves and joins in a qua-

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WHEELER: First, they may decide they can't win by putting in force they can't afford. At most they would put in two more divisions. Beyond that, they strip their country and invite a countermove on our part. Second, on volunteers—the one thing all North Vietnam fears is the Chinese. For them to invite Chinese volunteers is to invite China taking over North Vietnam. The weight of judgment is that North Vietnam may reinforce their troops, but they can't match us on a buildup. From a military viewpoint, we can handle, if we are determined to do so, China and North Vietnam.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you anticipate retaliation by the Soviets in the Berlin area?

WHEELER: You may have some flare-up but the lines are so tightly drawn in Berlin, that it raises the risk of escalation too quickly. Lemnitzer* thinks there will be no flare-up in Berlin. In Korea, if the Soviets undertook operations, it would be dangerous.

MCDONALD: Yes, sir. First, supply the forces Westmoreland has asked for. Second, prepare to furnish more men, 100,000, in 1966. Third, commence building in air and naval forces, and step up air attacks on North Vietnam. Fourth, bring in needed reserves and draft calls.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you have any ideas of what this will cost?

MCNAMARA: Yes, sir, twelve billion dollars in 1966.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you have any idea what effect this will have on our economy?

MCNAMARA: It would not require wage and price controls in my judgment. The price index ought not go up more than one point or two.

GENERAL MCCONNELL: If you put in these requested forces and increase air and sea effort, we can at least turn the tide to where we are not losing anymore. We need to be sure we get the best we can out of the South Vietnamese. We need to bomb all military targets available to us in North Vietnam. As to whether we can come to a satisfactory solution with these forces, I don't know. With these forces properly employed, and cutting off the VC supplies, we can surely do better than we are doing.

THE PRESIDENT: Do we have results of bombing actions and have they, in your judgment, been as fruitful and productive as we anticipated?

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*Lyman Lemnitzer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (October 1961 to July 1962) and supreme Allied commander, Europe (January 1963 to June 1969)

MCCONNELL: No, sir, they haven't been. They have been productive in South Vietnam, but not as productive in the North because we are not striking the targets that hurt them.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you seriously concerned when we change targets we escalate the war? They might send more fighters down. Can you be certain it won't escalate efforts on the ground? Would it hurt our chances at a conference if we killed civilians in this bombing, though of course we will take utmost precautions not to?

MCDONALD: We need to minimize all we can the killing of civilians.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you go beyond Westmoreland's recommendations?

MCDONALD: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: How many planes have we lost thus far?

MCDONALD: About 106 of all types. This is a small percentage of our total.

THE PRESIDENT: How many do we have out there?

MCDONALD: One hundred and forty-six combat. We have lost 54 combat.

THE PRESIDENT: How many Navy planes have we lost?

MCDONALD: It's in the thirties. We have about 125 Navy combat planes.

THE PRESIDENT: *Doesn't it really mean that if we follow Westmoreland's requests we are in a new war? Isn't this going off the diving board?*

MCNAMARA: If we carry forward all these recommendations, it would be a change in our policy. We have relied on the South to carry the brunt. Now we would be responsible for satisfactory military outcome.

THE PRESIDENT: *Would we be in agreement, that we would rather be out of there and make our stand somewhere else?*

GENERAL JOHNSON: The least desirable alternative is getting out. The second least is doing what we are doing. The best alternative is to get in and get the job done.

THE PRESIDENT: *But I don't know how we are going to get the job done. There are millions of Chinese.* I think they are going to put their stack in. Is this the best place to do it? We don't have the allies we had in Korea. Can we get our allies to cut off supplying the North?

MCNAMARA: No, sir, we can't prevent Japan, Britain, and the others from chartering ships to Haiphong.

THE PRESIDENT: Have we done anything to stop them?

MCNAMARA: No, we haven't put the pressure on them as we did in Cuba. But even if we did, it wouldn't stop the shipping.

BROWN: It seems that all of our alternatives are dark. I find myself in agreement with the others.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there anything to the argument that the South government will fail, and we will be asked to leave? If we try to match the enemy will we be bogged down in a protracted war and won't the government ask us to leave?

BROWN: Our lines of communication are very long, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: How long?

BROWN: About 7,000 miles from the west coast, but not too much greater than China's. The biggest weakness of the political situation is the lack of security they can offer their people.

THE PRESIDENT: Are we starting something that in two or three years we simply can't finish?

BROWN: It is costly to us to strangle slowly. But the chances of losing are less if we move in.

THE PRESIDENT: Suppose we told Ky of the requirements we need, and he turns them down. And then we have to get out and make our stand in Thailand.

BROWN: The Thais will go with the winner.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if we don't stop in Thailand, where would we stop?

MCNAMARA: Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma surely affect Malaysia. In two to three years the communist domination would stop there, but ripple effect would be great, in Japan, in India. We would have to give up some bases. Ayub would move closer to China. Greece, Turkey would move to neutralist positions. Communist agitation would increase in Africa.

GENERAL GREENE: Situation is as tough as when it started. But not as bad as it could be. Marines in the first corps areas are an example of the benefits that come to us. Here are the stakes as I see them. One, the national security stake; it is a matter of time before we would have to go in some place else. Two, there is the pledge we have made. Three, there is our prestige in the world. If you accept these stakes, there are two courses of action. One, get out. Two, stay in and win. Now, how to win in the North and in the South? The enclave concept will work. I would like to introduce enough Marines to do this. Two Marine divisions and one air wing. We have 28,000 out there now. We need an additional 72,000.

MCNAMARA: Mr. President, General Greene suggests these men over and above the Westmoreland request.

THE PRESIDENT: Then you are saying you will need 80,000 more Marines to carry this out?

GREENE: Yes, I am convinced we are making progress with the South Vietnamese, in food and construction. We are getting evidence of intelligence from the South Vietnamese. In the North, we haven't been hitting the right targets. We should hit pol (petroleum) storage, which is essential to their transportation. Also, we must destroy their airfields, their MIGs and their IL-28s.

THE PRESIDENT: What would they do?

GREENE: Nothing. We can test it by attacking pol storage. Then we should attack the industrial complex in the North. Also, they can be told by pamphlet drop why we are doing this. Then we ought to blockade Cambodia, and stop supplies from coming through there. *How long would it take? Five years, plus 500,000 troops. I think the American people would back you.*

THE PRESIDENT: How would you tell the American people what the stakes are?

GREENE: The place where they will stick by you is the national security stake.

GENERAL JOHNSON: We are in a face-down. The solution, unfortunately, is long-term. Once the military problem is solved the problem of political solution will be more difficult.

THE PRESIDENT: *If we come in with hundreds of thousands of men and billions of dollars, won't this cause China and Russia to come in? No one has given me a satisfactory answer to that.*

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about Thailand? It would be our main problem. Thailand has proved a good ally so far, though history shows it has never been a staunch ally. If we wanted to make a stand in Thailand, we might be able to make it. Another problem would be South Korea. We have two divisions there now. There would be a problem with Taiwan, but as long as the Generalissimo is there, they have no place to go. Indonesia is a problem, as is Malaysia. Japan thinks we are propping up a lifeless government and are on a sticky wicket. Between a long war and cutting our losses, the Japanese would go for the latter. My information on Japan comes from Reischauer (the American ambassador to Japan).

THE PRESIDENT: But George, wouldn't all these countries say that Uncle Sam was a paper tiger, wouldn't we lose credibility breaking the word of three presidents, if we did as you have proposed? It would seem to be an irresponsible blow. But I gather you don't think so?

BALL: No sir. The worse blow would be that the mightiest power on earth is unable to defeat a handful of guerrillas.

THE PRESIDENT: Then you are not basically troubled by what the world would say about our pulling out?

BALL: If we were actively helping a country with a stable government, it would be a vastly different story. Western Europeans look upon us as if we got ourselves into an imprudent situation.

THE PRESIDENT: But I believe that the Vietnamese are trying to fight.

BALL: Thieu spoke the other day and said the communists would win the election.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe that. Does anyone believe that? (All expressed views contrary to Ball.)

MCNAMARA: Ky will fall soon. He is weak. We can't have elections there until there is physical security, and even then there will be no elections because as Cabot said, there is no democratic tradition.

MCGEORGE BUNDY: *To accept Ball's argument would be a radical switch in policy without visible evidence that it should be done.* George's analysis gives no weight to losses suffered by the other side. The world, the country, and the Vietnamese people would have alarming reactions if we got out.

RUSK: If the communist world found out that the United States would not pursue its commitment to the end, there was no telling where they would stop their expansionisms.

LODGE: I feel there is greater threat to start World War III if we don't go in. *Can't we see the similarity to our indolence at Munich?* I simply can't be as pessimistic as Ball. We have great seaports in Vietnam. We don't need to fight on roads. We have the sea. Let us visualize meeting the VC on our own terms. We don't have to spend all our time in the jungles. If we can secure our bases, the Vietnamese can secure, in time, a political movement to, one, apprehend the terrorists, and two, give intelligence to the government. The procedures for this are known. I agree the Japanese agitators don't like what we are doing, but Sato is totally in agreement with our actions. The Vietnamese have been dealt more casualties than, per capita, we suffered in the Civil War. The Vietnamese soldier is an uncomplaining soldier. He has ideas he will die for.

UNGER: I agree that this is what we have to do. We have spotted some things we want to pay attention to.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we have said enough today. Let us adjourn for now.

George Ball's proposals had been heard and discredited. The next day, Johnson would meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to hear their reactions to McNamara's proposal. LBJ would again use the same type of questioning tactic to get approval for his chosen policy.

THE PRESIDENT: I asked Secretary McNamara to invite you here to counsel with you on these problems and the ways to meet them. I want you to hear from the chiefs the alternatives open to you and then recommendations on those alternatives from a military point of view. The options open to us are: one, leave the country, with as little loss as possible; two, maintain present force and lose slowly; three, add 100,000 men, recognizing that may not be enough and adding more next year. The disadvantages of number three option are the risk of escalation, casualties high, and the prospect of a long war without victory. I would like you to start out by stating our present position as you see it, and where we can go.

ADMIRAL MCDONALD (CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS): Sending in the Marines has improved the situation. I agree with McNamara that we are committed to the extent that we can't move out. If we continue the way we are now, it will be a slow, sure victory for the other side. But putting more men in it will turn the tide and let us know what further we need to do. I wish we had done this long before.

THE PRESIDENT: But you don't know if 100,000 men will be enough. What makes you conclude that if you don't know where we are going —and what will happen—we shouldn't pause and find this out?

ADMIRAL MCDONALD: Sooner or later we will force them to the conference table.

THE PRESIDENT: But if we put in 100,000 men won't they put in an equal number, and then where will we be?

ADMIRAL MCDONALD: Not if we step up our bombing. . . .

THE PRESIDENT: Is this a chance we want to take?

ADMIRAL MCDONALD: Yes, sir, when I view the alternatives. Get out now or pour in more men.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that all?

MCDONALD: Well, I think our allies will lose faith in us.

THE PRESIDENT: We have few allies really helping us now.

MCDONALD: Take Thailand for example. If we walk out of Vietnam, the whole world will question our word. We don't have much choice.

PAUL NITZE: In that area not occupied by US forces, it is worse, as I observed on my trip out there. We have two alternatives, Mr. President. Support the Vietnamese throughout their country or stick to the secure positions we do have. We need to make it clear to the populace that we are on their side. Then gradually turn the tide of losses by aiding the ARVN at certain points.

THE PRESIDENT: What are our chances of success?

NITZE: If we want to turn the tide, by putting in more men, it would be about sixty-forty. If we gave Westmoreland all he asked for, what are our chances? I don't agree that the North Vietnamese and China won't come in. Expand the area we could maintain. In the Philippines and Greece it was shown that guerrillas can lose.

THE PRESIDENT: Would you send in more forces than Westmoreland requests?

NITZE: Yes sir. It depends on how quickly the. . . .

THE PRESIDENT: How many? Two hundred thousand instead of 100,000?

NITZE: We would need another 100,000 in January.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you do that?

NITZE: Yes, sir.

MCNAMARA: The current plan is to introduce 100,000 men with the possibility of a second 100,000 by the first of the year.

THE PRESIDENT: What reaction is this going to produce?

GENERAL WHEELER: Since we are not proposing an invasion of the North, the Soviets will step up material and propaganda, and the same with the Chicoms. The North Vietnamese might introduce more regular troops.

THE PRESIDENT: Why wouldn't North Vietnam pour in more men? Also, why wouldn't they call on volunteers from China and Russia?

Reaction to McNamara's Proposals and a Discussion of Alternatives - July 21, 1965

Upon his return from a Saigon conference with Westmoreland and Taylor, McNamara present President Johnson with a Memorandum on July 20, 1965m that called for an escalation of troops (see details in Reading 207, Memorandum for the President by McNamara).

The following document highlights the discussion of alternatives to McNamara's proposals by Johnson's top advisors that began on July 21, and lasted throughout the coming week.

The majority of the meetings were attended by State Dept. members: Rusk, George Ball, Lodge, William Bundy and Unger; Defense Dept.: McNamara, Vance and McNaughton; Wheeler from the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and White House staff members: McGeorge Bundy, Valenti, Busby and Cooper.

This discussion of alternatives was of extreme importance for its outcome would change the war from support of the South Vietnamese to a direct, aggressive combat intervention.

In later years, some of the attendees stated that the President had already made his decision to escalate prior to any discusion and that these meetings and his questions were designed only to build support for that decision.

> **GEORGE BALL:** Isn't it possible that the VC will do what they did against the French—stay away from confrontation and not accommodate us?
>
> **GENERAL WHEELER:** Yes, that is possible, but by constantly harassing them, they will have to fight somewhere.

MCNAMARA: If the VC doesn't fight in large units, it will give the ARVN a chance to resecure hostile areas. We don't know what VC tactics will be when the VC is confronted by 175,000 Americans.

RABORN: We agree. By 1965's end, we expect NVN to increase its forces. It will attempt to gain a substantial victory before our build-up is complete.

THE PRESIDENT: *Is there anyone here of the opinion we should not do what the memorandum says? If so, I want to hear from him now, in detail.*

BALL: Mr. President, I can foresee a perilous voyage, very dangerous. I have great and grave apprehensions that we can win under these conditions. But let me be clear. If the decision is to go ahead, I am committed.

THE PRESIDENT: But, George, is there another course in the national interest, some course that is better than the one McNamara proposes? We know it is dangerous and perilous, but the big question is, can it be avoided?

BALL: There is no course that will allow us to cut our losses. If we get bogged down, our cost might be substantially greater. The pressures to create a larger war would be inevitable. The qualifications I have are not due to the fact that I think we are in a bad moral position.

THE PRESIDENT: Tell me then, what other road can I go?

BALL: Take what precautions we can, Mr. President. Take our losses, let their government fall apart, negotiate, discuss, knowing full well there will be a probable take-over by the Communists. This is disagreeable, I know.

THE PRESIDENT: I can take disagreeable decisions. But I want to know can we make a case for your thoughts? Can you discuss it fully?

BALL: We have discussed it. I have had my day in court.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think we can have made any full commitment, George. You have pointed out the danger, but you haven't really proposed an alternative course. We haven't always been right. We have no mortgage on victory. Right now, I am concerned that we have very little alternatives to what we are doing. I want another meeting, more meetings, before we take any definitive action. We must look at all other courses of possibility carefully. Right now I feel it would be more dangerous to lose this now, than endanger a great number of troops. But I want this fully discussed.

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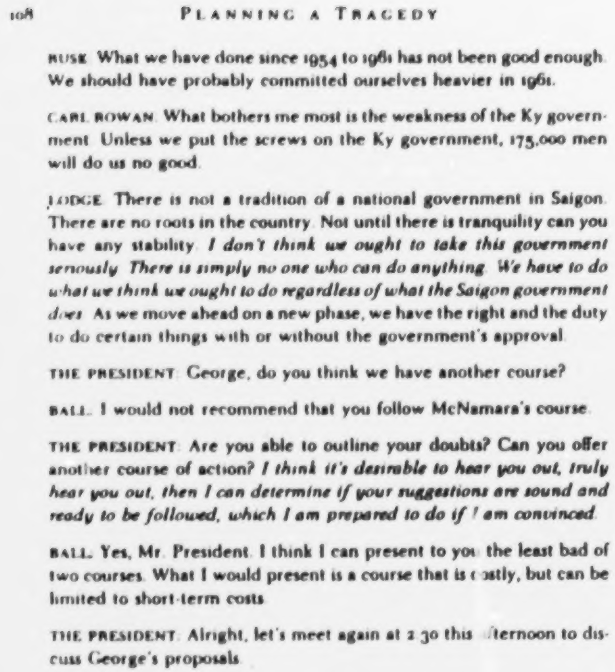

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RUSK What we have done since 1954 to 1961 has not been good enough. We should have probably committed ourselves heavier in 1961.

CARL ROWAN What bothers me most is the weakness of the Ky government. Unless we put the screws on the Ky government, 175,000 men will do us no good.

LODGE There is not a tradition of a national government in Saigon. There are no roots in the country. Not until there is tranquility can you have any stability. *I don't think we ought to take this government seriously. There is simply no one who can do anything. We have to do what we think we ought to do regardless of what the Saigon government does.* As we move ahead on a new phase, we have the right and the duty to do certain things with or without the government's approval.

THE PRESIDENT George, do you think we have another course?

BALL I would not recommend that you follow McNamara's course.

THE PRESIDENT Are you able to outline your doubts? Can you offer another course of action? *I think it's desirable to hear you out, truly hear you out, then I can determine if your suggestions are sound and ready to be followed, which I am prepared to do if I am convinced.*

BALL Yes, Mr. President. I think I can present to you the least bad of two courses. What I would present is a course that is costly, but can be limited to short-term costs.

THE PRESIDENT Alright, let's meet again at 2:30 this afternoon to discuss George's proposals.

Ball presented his reservations concerning the U.S. military's combat effectiveness in jungle terrain and suggested that allowing the fall of Saigon and then negotiating with the Communist might be the least worrisome path to take.

Johnson allowed a full discussion of this option, but he had apparently closed his mind to any alternative to escalation.

BALL: We cannot win, Mr. President. The war will be long and protracted. The most we can hope for is a messy conclusion. There remains a great danger of intrusion by the Chinese. *But the biggest problem is the problem of the long war.* The Korean experience was a galling one. The correlation between Korean casualties and public opinion showed support stabilized at 50 percent. As casualties increase, the pressure to strike at the very jugular of North Vietnam will become very great. I am concerned about world opinion. If we could win in a year's time, and win decisively, world opinion would be alright. However, if the war is long and protracted, as I believe it will be, then we will suffer because the world's greatest power cannot defeat guerrillas. Then there is the problem of national politics. Every great captain in history was not afraid to make a tactical withdrawal if conditions were unfavorable to him. The enemy cannot even be seen in Vietnam. He is indigenous to the country. I truly have serious doubts that an army of Westerners can successfully fight Orientals in an Asian jungle.*

THE PRESIDENT: This is important. Can Westerners, in the absence of accurate intelligence, successfully fight Asians in jungle rice paddies? I want McNamara and General Wheeler to seriously ponder this question.

BALL: I think we all have underestimated the seriousness of this situation. It is like giving cobalt treatment to a terminal cancer case. I think a long, protracted war will disclose our weakness, not our strength. The least harmful way to cut losses in SVN is to let the government decide it doesn't want us to stay there. Therefore, we should put such proposals to the GVN that they can't accept. Then, it would move to a neutralist position. I have no illusions that after we were asked to leave South Vietnam, that country would soon come under Hanoi control. What little more than the power situation. A fairly large number of US (or perhaps "international") forces may be required to stay in Vietnam.

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*concerns were raised about guerilla warfare by Chester Cooper with a reminder that the U.S. had no demonstrated effectiveness against this tactic.

The overall evaluation is that the course of action recommended in this memorandum--if the military and political moves are properly integrated and executed with continuing vigor and visible determination--stands a good chance of achieving an acceptable outcome within a reasonable time in Vietnam.

[1] Ambassador Lodge states "any further initiative by us now (before we are strong) would simply harden the Communist resolve not to stop fighting." Ambassadors Taylor and Johnson would maintain discreet contacts with the Soviets, but otherwise agree with Ambassador Lodge.

[2] Note footnote to paragraph 4 (c).

[3] Ambassador Lodge points out that we may face a neutralist government at some time in the future and that in those circumstances the US should be prepared to carry on alone.

(210) CHINESE NEWSPAPERS, *JEN-MIN, JIH PAO*, AND *HUNG CHI*. EDITORIAL, NOVEMBER 11, 1965. [Extract]

Source: *"Refutation of the New Leaders of the C.P.S.U. on 'United Action,'" Peking Review*, November 12, 1965, pp. 15-17.

The final Chinese response to the Soviet Union proposal that the two Communist powers cooperate in support of the Vietnamese revolutionaries fighting against the U.S., was a blistering attack on Soviet policy for collaborating with the U.S. against the Vietnamese. This editorial reflected the views of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, who had purged opponents of his policies of refusing cooperation with the Soviets to oppose U.S. intervention in Vietnam.

The crux of the matter is that, so far from opposing U.S. imperialism, the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. are allying themselves and collaborating with it to dominate the world. They have thus set themselves in opposition to the united front against U.S. imperialism. If they really opposed U.S. imperialism and did so by actual deeds, we would readily take united action with them. But their so-called opposition to U.S. imperialism is only verbal and not genuine. We must tell them the truth: So long as their line of Soviet-U.S. collaboration against world revolution remains unchanged, and so long as they do not abandon their alliance with U.S. imperialism and reaction, we absolutely refuse to take any "united action" with them. We absolutely refuse to serve as a pawn in their secret diplomacy the U.S. imperialism or help them cover up their assistance to U.S. imperialism in suppressing the peoples' revolution in various countries.

The new leaders of the C.P.S.U. never weary of saying that, however serious the differences between them, Communists must take "united action" on the question of Viet Nam at this urgent juncture in the Vietnamese people's struggle against the United States.

Since the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. have destroyed the basis of international proletarian unity, and since they transpose enemies and friends and persist in the line of Soviet-U.S. collaboration for world domination, is it still possible for the Marxist-Leninist parties to take united action with them on the question of Viet Nam?

At a time when the U.S. imperialists are committing rabid aggression against Viet Nam, all Communist Parties and socialist countries should as a matter of course take a unanimous stand and firmly support the Vietnamese people's just struggle to smash this aggression. The point is that the stand taken by the revisionist leadership of the C.P.S.U. on the question of Viet Nam is inseparable from their revisionist programme and line, and is contrary to the principled stand required of a Marxist-Leninist party.

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When Khrushchov was in power, the revisionist leadership of the C.P.S.U. openly sided with U.S. imperialism and opposed and undermined the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. aggression. They alleged that "any small 'local war' might spark off the conflagration of a world war." Using this absurd argument to frighten and intimidate all peoples engaged in revolutionary armed struggle, they openly refused to support and aid the Vietnamese people in their anti-U.S. struggle. When the struggles of the Vietnamese and the Laotian peoples against U.S. imperialism grew acute, their policy on the question of Indo-China was one of "disengagement." In July 1964, they indicated the desire of the Soviet Government to resign from its post as one of the two co-chairmen of the Geneva conference. Soon afterwards, when the U.S. imperialists engineered the Bac Bo Gulf incident, Khrushchov went so far as to concoct the slander that the incident was provoked by China.

The situation in Viet Nam developed directly contrary to the wishes of the Khrushchov revisionists. The Vietnamese people won victory after victory in their revolutionary anti-U.S. struggle, while the U.S. aggressors grew hard pressed. The new leaders of the C.P.S.U. came to realize that it was no longer advisable to copy Khrushchov's policy of "disengagement" in its totality. So they switched to the policy of involvement, that is, of getting their hand in.

The policy of involvement and the policy of disengagement are essentially the same. Both are products of Khrushchov revisionism and both are designed to meet the needs of U.S. imperialism.

The U.S. imperialists urgently need to extinguish the roaring flames of the Vietnamese people's revolution. And so do the Khrushchov revisionists because they want to carry out their line of Soviet-U.S. collaboration for world domination. When Khrushchov was following the policy of "disengagement," he was acting in close-co-ordination with John F. Kennedy. And now that the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. are following the policy of involvement, they are similarly acting in tacit agreement and close collaboration with Lyndon B. Johnson.

Please consider the following facts:

In January 1965 the U.S. imperialists asked the Soviet Government to use its influence to have the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam accept two conditions: (1) stop supporting south Viet Nam, and first of all stop supplying it with guns; and (2) stop the attacks on cities in south Viet Nam. Faithfully obeying the orders of the U.S. imperialists, the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. officially transmitted to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam these preposterous demands, which were aimed at forcing the Vietnamese people into unconditional surrender.

The new leaders of the C.P.S.U. have been busy running errands for the U.S. aggressors, who are anxious to find a way out of their predicament in Viet Nam. When Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R., passed through Peking on his visit to Viet Nam in February 1965 and exchanged views with Chinese leaders, he stressed the need to help the United States "find a way out of Viet Nam." This was firmly rebutted by the Chinese leaders. We expressed the hope that the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. would support the struggle of the Vietnamese people and not make a deal with the United States on the question of Viet Nam. Kosygin expressed agreement with our views and stated that they would "not bargain with others on this issue." However, the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. soon went back on their promise.

Johnson wanted to play his fraudulent game of "unconditional discussions." So the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. put forward the idea of "unconditional negotiations." On February 16 this year, the day after Kosygin's return to Moscow, the Soviet Government officially put before Viet Nam and China a proposal to convene a new international conference on Indo-China without

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prior conditions, which in fact was advocacy of "unconditional negotiations" on the Viet Nam question. On February 23, disregarding the stand which the Vietnamese Government had taken against this proposal and without waiting for a reply from China, the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. discussed the question of calling the above-mentioned international conference with the President of France through the Soviet Ambassador to France.

Johnson's fraud of "unconditional discussions" met with a stern rebuff from the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The new leaders of the C.P.S.U. then began publicly to insinuate that negotiations could be held if only the United States stopped its bombing of north Viet Nam. They engaged in vigorous activities in the international field with a view to putting this project into effect. In communications to certain fraternal Parties, they said explicitly that they favoured negotiations with the United States on condition it stopped bombing north Viet Nam. They also said that ways and means should be sought to settle the Viet Nam question through negotiations. And sure enough, not long afterwards Johnson came out with the manoeuvre of "the temporary suspension of bombing."

After these plots of "unconditional negotiations" and of "stopping the bombing and holding negotiations" were foiled, the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. began to collaborate with the Indian reactionaries and the Tito clique--both lackeys of U.S. imperialism--as brokers on the question of Viet Nam. In their prescription for this question there was only mention of the cessation of U.S. bombing of north Viet Nam, only abstract talk about the implementation of the Geneva agreements but no mention of the fact that the crucial point in the implementation of these agreements is the complete withdrawal of the U.S. aggressor troops from Viet Nam. In addition, the new leaders of the C.P.S.U. have been engaged in secret diplomatic activities. In a nutshell, their purpose is to help the United States to bring about "peace talks" by deception, "peace talks" which could go on indefinitely and also allow the United States to hang on in south Viet Nam indefinitely.

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3. *Estimate of the situation*. The situation in South Vietnam is worse than a year ago (when it was worse than a year before that). After a few months of stalemate, the tempo of the war has quickened. A hard VC push is now on to dismember the nation and to maul the army. The VC main and local forces, reinforced by militia and guerrillas; have the initiative and, with large attacks (some in regimental strength), are hurting ARVN forces badly. The main VC efforts have been in southern I Corps, northern and central II Corps and north of Saigon. The central highlands could well be lost to the National Liberation Front during this monsoon season. Since June 1, the GVN has been forced to abandon six district capitals; only one has been retaken. US combat troop deployments and US/VNAF strikes against the North have put to rest most South Vietnamese fears that the United States will foresake them, and US/VNAF air strikes in-country have probably shaken VC morale somewhat. Yet the government is able to provide security to fewer and fewer people in less and less territory as terrorism increases. Cities and towns are being isolated as fewer and fewer roads and railroads are usable and power and communications lines are cut.

The economy is deteriorating--the war is disrupting rubber production, rice distribution, Dajat vegetable production and the coastal fishing industry, causing the loss of jobs and income, displacement of people and frequent breakdown or suspension of vital means of transportation and communication; foreign exchange earnings have fallen; and severe inflation is threatened.

The odds are less than even that the Ky government will last out the year. Ky is "executive agent" for a directorate of generals. His government is youthful and inexperienced, but dedicated to a "revolutionary" program. His tenure depends upon unity of the armed forces behind him. If the directorate holds together and the downward trend of the war is halted, the religious and regional factions will probably remain quiescent; otherwise there will be political turbulence and possibly uncoordinated efforts to negotiate settlement with the DRV. The Buddhists, Catholics, out-politicians and business community are "wait-and-seeing;" the VC, while unable alone to generate effective unrest in the cities, can "piggyback" on any anti-government demonstration or cause.

Rural reconstruction (pacification) even in the Hop Tac area around Saigon is making little progress. Gains in IV Corps are being held, but in I and II Corps and adjacent III Corps areas it has lost ground fast since the start of the VC monsoon offensive (300,000 people have been lost to the VC, and tens of thousands of refugees have poured out of these areas).

The Government-to-VC ratio over-all is now only a little better than 3-to-1, and in combat battalions little better than 0.5-to-1. Some ARVN units have been mauled; many are understrength and therefore "conservation." Desertions are at a high rate, and the force build-up has slipped badly. The VC, who are undoubtedly suffering badly too (their losses are very high), now control a South Vietnamese manpower pool of 500,000 to 1 million fighting-age men and reportedly are trying to double their combat strength, largely by forced draft (down to 15-year-olds) in the increasing areas they control. They seem to be able more than to replace their losses.

There are no signs that we have throttled the inflow of supplies for the VC or can throttle the flow while their material needs are as low as they are: indeed more and better weapons have been observed in VC hands, and it is probable that there has been further build-up of North Vietnamese regular units in the I and II Corps areas, with at least three full regiments (all of the 325th Division) there. Nor have our air attacks in North Vietnam produced tangible evidence of willingness on the part of Hanoi to come to the conference table in a reasonable mood. The DRV/VC seem to believe that South Vietnam is on the run and near collapse; they show no signs of settling for less than a complete take-over.

4. *Options open to us*. We must choose among three courses of action with respect to Vietnam all of which involve different probabilities, outcomes and costs:

a. Cut our losses and withdraw under the best conditions that can be arranged--almost certainly conditions humiliating the United States and very damaging to our future effectiveness on the world scene.

b. Continue at about the present level, with the US forces limited to say 75,000, holding on and playing for the breaks--a course of action which, because our position would grow weaker, almost certainly would confront us later with a choice between withdrawal and an emergency expansion of forces, perhaps too late to do any good.

c. Expand promptly and substantially the US military pressure against the Viet Cong in the South and maintain the military pressure against the North Vietnamese in the North while launching a vigorous effort on the political side[1] to lay the groundwork for a favorable outcome by clarifying our objectives and establishing channels of communication. This alternative would stave off defeat in the short run and offer a good chance of producing a favorable settlement in the longer run; at the same time it would imply a commitment to see a fighting war clear through at considerable cost in casualties and material and would make any later decision to withdraw even more difficult and even more costly than would be the case today.

My recommendations in paragraph 5 below are based on the choice of the third alternative (Option c) as the course of action involving the best odds of the best outcome with the most acceptable cost to the United States.

5. Military recommendations. There are now 15 US (and 1 Australian) combat battalions in Vietnam; they, together with other combat personnel and non-combat personnel, bring the total US personnel in Vietnam to approximately 75,000.

a. I recommend that the deployment of US ground troops in Vietnam be increased by October to 34 maneuver battalions (or, if the Koreans fail to provide the expected 9 battalions promptly, to 43 battalions). The battalions together with increases in helicopter lift, air squadrons, naval units, air defense, combat support and miscellaneous log support and advisory personnel which I also recommend--would bring tht total US personnel in Vietnam to approximately 175,000 (200,000 if we must make up for the Korean failure). It should be understood that the deployment of more men (perhaps 100,000) may be necessary in early 1966, and that the deployment of additional forces thereafter is possible but will depend on developments.

b. I recommend that Congress be requested to authorize the call-up of approximately 235,000 men in the Reserve and National Guard. (Deleted)

The call-up would be for a two-year period; but the intention would be to release them after one year, by which time they could be relieved by regular forces if conditions permitted.

c. I recommend that the regular armed forces be increased by approximately 375,000 men (approximately 250,000 Army, 75,000 Marines, 25,000 Air Force and 25,000 Navy). (Deleted)

The increase would be accomplished by increasing recruitment, increasing the draft and extending tours of duty of men already in the service.

d. I recommend that a supplemental appropriation of approximately $X for FY 1966 be sought from the Congress to cover the first part of the added costs attributable to the build-up in and for the war in Vietnam. A further supplemental appropriation might be required later in the fiscal year.

It should be noted that in mid-1966 the United States would, as a consequence of the above method of handling the build-up, have approximately 600,000 additional men (deleted) as protection against contingencies.

6. Use of forces. The forces will be used however they can be brought to bear most effectively. The US/third country ground forces will operate in coordination with South Vietnamese forces. They will defend their own bases; they will assist in providing security in neighboring areas; they will augment Vietnamese forces, assuring retention of key logistic areas and population centers. Also, in the initial phase they will maintain a small reserve-reaction force, conducting nuisance raids and spoiling attacks, and opening and securing selected lines of communication; as in-country around strength increases to a level permitting extended US and third-country forces, by aggressive exploitation of superior military forces, are to gain and hold the initiative--keeping the enemy at a disadvantage, maintaining a tempo such as to deny them time to recuperate or regain their balance, and pressing the fight against VC/DRV main force units in South Vietnam to run them to ground and destroy them. The operations should combine to compel the VC/DRV to fight at a higher and more sustained intensity with resulting higher logistical consumption and, at the same time, to limit his capability to resupply forces in combat at that scale by attacking his LOC. The concept

assumes vigorous prosecution of the air and sea anti-infiltration campaign and includes increased use of air in-country, including B-52s, night and day to harass VC in their havens. Following destruction of the VC main force units, the South Vietnamese must reinstitute the Program and Rural Reconstruction as an antidote to the continuing VC campaign of terror and subversion.

7. Actions against North Vietnam. We should continue the program of bombing military targets in North Vietnam. While avoiding striking population and industrial targets not closely related to the DRV's supply of war material to the VC, we should announce to Hanoi and carry out actions to destroy such supplies and to interdict their flow. The number of strike sorties against North Vietnam--against fixed targets and for armed reconnaissance--should increase slowly from the present level of 2,500 a month to 4,000 or more a month. We should be prepared at any time to carry out a severe reprisal should the VC or DRV commit a particularly damaging or horrendous act (e.g., VC interdiction of the Saigon river could call for a quarantine of DRV harbors, or VC assassination of a high-ranking US official could call for destruction of all of the major power plants in North Vietnam); the chances of our reprisal action leading to escalation is not large in such an instance. After the 44 13/third-country battalions have been deployed and after some strong action has been taken in the program of bombing the North (e.g., after the key railroad bridges north of Hanoi have been dropped), we could, as part of diplomatic initiative, consider introducing a 6-8 week pause in the program of bombing the North.

8. Other actions in South Vietnam. The military program cannot do the job alone. Among others, the following actions should also be taken in South Vietnam:

a. Continue doggedly to "strengthen the rear" by pressing forward with the rural reconstruction (pacification) program, realizing both that the program has little chance of meaningful success unless and until security can be provided, and that the program is fundamental to full success once security is provided.

b. Keep working with the government in Saigon to make it more effective and more stable. Consider using the deployment of the US troops as the occasion to lay down some terms--e.g., regarding the presence and use of a US-controlled rice reserve, an effective US veto on major GVN military commanders, statements about invading North Vietnam, and so on.

c. Take steps to meet the economic shortages and disruptions. Especially the recurring threat of rice inflation should be countered by the provision of an in-country US-controlled rice reserve.

d. Take informational actions to undermine VC morale by reference to VC defeats, to GVN/US weapon superiority, to air attacks on their bases, etc., and by encouraging VC to defect either to the government or "back home." In this connection, the Chien Hoi program (to induce VC defections) must be revitalized immediately.

9. Expanded political moves.[2] Together with the above military moves, we should take political initiatives in order to lay a groundwork for a favorable political settlement by clarifying our objectives and establishing channels of communications. At the same time as we are taking steps to turn the tide in South Vietnam, we should make quiet moves through diplomatic channels (a) to open a dialogue with Moscow and Hanoi, and perhaps the VC, looking first toward disabusing them of any mis-conceptions as to our goals and second toward laying the groundwork for a settlement when the time is ripe; (b) to keep the Soviet Union from deepening its military involvement and support of North Vietnam and from generating crises elsewhere in the world until the time when settlement can be achieved; and (c) to cement support for US policy by the US public, allies and friends, and to keep international opposition at a manageable level. Our efforts may be unproductive until the tide begins to turn, but nevertheless they should be made.

10. South Vietnamese reaction to expansion of US forces. Three factors dominate the psychological situation in South Vietnam: (a) the military situation (i.e., the security problem), (b) the effectiveness of the government as a vehicle for dynamic leadership, and (c) the implications of the growing American presence. The deployments recommended in paragraph 5 run some risk of causing the Vietnamese to "turn the war over to us" and of

generating an "anti-colonial" type resentment toward us. The GVN has requested the additional US forces urgently (indeed, they want 9 battalions more than the 44 recommended here). When Ky was asked about the popular reaction, he said, "We will explain it to our people." Thieu agreed saying, "They know that you are not here to make us a colony." Former Prime Minister Quat told me, "The only way to save Vietnam is to send a large number of troops." He added, "The people of South Vietnam will not object." The spectres of widespread adverse public reaction have been raised each time we deployed personnel in the past, and, while no deployment has been so massive as this one, no such reaction appeared. Furthermore, the key requirement for continued viability of the Vietnamese spirit in the short run is evidence that RVNAF/US/third-country forces can contain the VC/DRV monsoon offensive and reopen communications; in the longer run the requirement will be evidence of bringing the war to a satisfactory close.

11. Communist reaction to the expanded program. The Soviets can be expected to continue material assistance to North Vietnam and to lodge verbal complaints, but not to intervene otherwise. (deleted)

The DRV, on the other hand, may well send up to several divisions of regular forces in South Vietnam to assist the VC if they see the tide turning and victory, once so near, being snatched away. This possible DRV action is the most ominous one, since it would lead to increased pressures on us to "counter-invade" North Vietnam and to extend air strikes to population targets in the North, acceding to these pressures could bring the Soviets and the Chinese in. The Viet Cong, especially if they continue to take high losses, can be expected to depend increasingly upon the PAVN forces as the war moves into a more conventional phase; but they may find ways to continue almost indefinitely their present intensive military, guerrilla and terror activities, particularly if reinforced by some regular PAVN units. A key question on the military side is whether POL, ammunition, and cadres can be cut off and, if they are cut off, whether this really renders the Viet Cong impotent.

12. Evaluation. ARVN overall is not capable of successfully resisting the VC initiatives without more active assistance from more US/third-country ground forces than those thus far committed. Without further outside help, the ARVN is faced with successive tactical reverses, loss of key communication and population centers particularly in the highlands, piecemeal destruction of ARVN units, attrition of RVNAF will to fight, and loss of civilian confidence. Early commitment of additional US/third-country forces in sufficient quantity, in general reserve and offensive roles, should stave off GVN defeat.

The success of the program from the military point of view turns on whether the Vietnamese hold their own in terms of numbers and fighting spirit, and on whether the US forces can be effective in a quick-reaction reserve role, a role in which they are only now being tested. The number of US troops is too small to make a significant difference in the traditional 10-1 government-guerrilla formula, but it is not too small to make a significant difference in the kind of war which seems to be evolving in Vietnam--a "Third Stage" or conventional war in which it is easier to identify, locate and attack the enemy.

The plan is such that the risk of escalation into war with China or the Soviet Union can be kept small. US and South Vietnamese casualties will increase--just how much cannot be predicted with confidence, but the US killed-in-action might be in the vicinity of 500 a month by the end of the year. The South Vietnamese under one government or another will probably see the thing through[3] and the United States public will support the course of action because it is a sensible and courageous military-political program designed and likely to bring about a success in Vietnam.

It should be recognized, however, that success against the larger, more conventional, VC/PAVN forces could merely drive the VC back into the trees and back to their 1960-64 pattern--a pattern against which US troops and aircraft would be of limited value but with which the GVN, with our help, could cope. The questions here would be whether the VC could maintain morale after such a set back, and whether the South Vietnamese would have the will to hang on through another cycle. It should be recognized also that, even in "success," it is not obvious how we will be able to disengage our forces from Vietnam. It is unlikely that a formal agreement good enough for the purpose could possibly be negotiated--because the arrangement can reflect

4. Concept of Employment.

A. The CINCPAC analysis of the situation and concept of operations is properly focussed upon the population--that is, upon the people. There is no doubt whatsoever that the insurgency in South Vietnam must eventually be defeated among the people in the hamlets and towns. However, in order to defeat the insurgency among the people, they must be provided security of two kinds:

(1) Security of the country as a whole from large, well organized and equipped forces, including those which may come from outside their country.

(2) Security from the guerrilla, the assassin, the terrorist and the informer.

B. I am convinced that US troops can contribute heavily in the first category of security, but that only the Vietnamese can make real progress and succeed in respect to the second. Unfortunately, the Vietnam Army is being drawn away from the people and their security in order to meet the challenge of the main force Viet Cong/North Vietnamese offensive. The best illustration of this point is the fact that the II Corps commander has removed most of the troops from the Province of Binh Dinh with its nearly one million people in order to defend the relatively less important Province capitals of Kontum and Pleiku. Therefore, my concept is basically to employ US forces, together with Vietnamese Airborne and Marine Battalions of the general reserve, against the hardcore North Vietnam/Viet Cong forces in reaction and search and destroy operations, and thus permit the concentration of Vietnamese troops in the heavily populated areas along the coast, around Saigon and in the Delta.

C. We have tailored logistic support forces to provide for some tactical flexibility so that forces may be shifted in accordance with the strength and movement of the Viet Cong. Continuous adjustments and redistributions undoubtedly will be necessary. It is likely that the war will continue to become more fluid and more mobile. We believe that the major bases at Da Nang, Chu Lai, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh and Saigon-Bien Hoa provide the backbone support on which mobile forces can be supported and from which they can maneuver.

D. It is not our concept that the US would take exclusive control or responsibility for any entire province although, in practice, only token South Vietnamese forces might remain. Thus generally, we must match our forces with the territorial organization of the South Vietnamese. We must strengthen and support the South Vietnamese Armed Force structure to keep it alive and operative. We should generally concentrate US forces away from major population centers and whenever possible do the bulk of our fighting in more remote areas.

5. Deployments

A. I recognize that the in-country location of ground combat forces has a bearing upon the size, nature and location of logistic support forces, ports, airfields and related facilities. For this reason, I have indicated from time to time the proposed initial location of the combat forces for which requirements have developed. However, as the number of combat forces requested and required increases and the number of combinations and permutations regarding location correspondingly increases, we rapidly approach a point where everyone will be confused and no useful purpose will be served.

B. The Viet Cong are now maneuvering large forces up to reinforced regiments equipped with heavy weapons. Thus, we are approaching the kind of warfare faced by the French in the latter stages of their efforts here. It is entirely possible that the North Vietnamese can and will deploy three or more divisions into South Vietnam by infiltration. It is highly likely that one is already here. Therefore, it will be necessary to react to the introduction of North Vietnamese forces and to the shift and tactical play of the Viet Cong. Thus, tactical dispositions will change and only the major bases will be fixed. In short, we will be conducting mobile warfare from fixed and defended bases. Some of these bases will be major logistics centers at ports and airfields such as Chu Lai and Cam Ranh. Others will be tactical bases such as An Khe or Pleiku. The tactical bases will move as necessary and that may be with some frequency as the battle develops.

C. With these thoughts in mind, my review of the tactical situation, corps-by-corps, will indicate the probable deployment of required US forces:

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(1) I Corps. This corps is highly vulnerable to the introduction of North Vietnam forces. It has virtually no reserve and is barely able to hold the major population centers, province and district towns. We believe that the 3rd Marine Division, augmented by two battalions, as recommended, can provide adequate reserve reaction forces for this I Corps at the present level of Viet Cong activity. With a full division, the equivalent of one battalion will be available for employment throughout the corps in a reaction role away from the base area.

(2) II Corps. This corps has a hopelessly large area to cover with the meager forces available. Additionally, the Vietnamese have a fixation on the importance of Kontum and Pleiku, probably derived from the history of the Viet Minh War. Recently, the corps commander has denuded Binh Dinh Province (with nearly a million inhabitants) in order to reinforce Kontum with two marine battalions. The Viet Cong control Phu Yen Province except for Tuy Hoa itself and, as reported earlier, the 325th Division may be deployed in Kontum, Pleiku and Phu Bon. The 23rd Division is scattered so widely that it cannot react in strength to Viet Cong attacks against isolated province capitals and district towns. We are greatly concerned that such towns as Ham Tan in Binh Tuy and Gia Nhia in Quang Duc and even Phan Thiet in Binh Thuan may be attacked. Corps commanders without adequate reserves have shown conclusive evidence that they will move timidly and too late in a piecemeal manner upon the event of a Viet Cong heavy attack. This is resulting in the loss of Vietnamese battalions faster than they can be organized, trained and equipped. The II Corps requires heavy reinforcements. We have asked for an infantry brigade, an airborne division and a South Korean Division. We would generally employ these forces as follows:

a. The South Koreans appear to be sensitive to the possibility of heavy casualities and would be pleased, we believe, to take over the security mission at the major logistic base of Cam Ranh and Qui Nhon. Although two regimental combat teams are not required for the defense of Qui Nhon, they can profitably be used there to extend the secure area and reinforce the South Vietnamese in that populous and important province. If only one South Korean regimental combat team becomes available, we would employ it to relieve the 1st Division Brigade at Qui Nhon and Cam Ranh.

b. Having been relieved by the South Koreans of the security of Qui Nhon and Cam Ranh, we visualize the employment of the 1st Division Brigade in the general area of Highway 19 west of Qui Nhon toward An Khe. The security of Route 19 is important not only in the event of the deployment of major US forces on the high plateau, but is equally essential for the support of the population in that area and for the delivery of fuel for current combat operations. The fact is that highway 19 must be kept open. There is no feasible way into the high plateau from north or south. If the plateau is abandoned, it will form the first significant territory of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and will be recognized and supported by China through Cambodia.

c. We believe that Route 19 and the Pleiku-Kontum area present a challenge which must be met. We do not believe that the Vietnamese Armed Forces can do the job. If the Viet Cong elect to fight a major campaign for Route 19 with North Vietnamese or Viet Cong forces, this is as good terrain as any, and better than most, on which such a battle should take place. It is vastly preferable to the populated lowlands. The problem in Vietnam has always been one of finding, fixing and fighting successfully the elusive Viet Cong. If Route 19 becomes a magnet, it tends to solve several of these problems. With the mobility, communication and firepower of the air assault division supported by tactical air, we believe the battle of the road will be won and that the road can be used by the division. The division can be supported over the road for the bulk of its requirements; and can be backed up as necessary by a C130 Squadron on a contingency basis, augmented by C-123 and Caribou, as well as Chinook helicopters, which are organic to the division. The air assault division consumes fuel, ammunition, food, and miscellaneous supplies at a rate which varies from 600 tons at the maximum to 100 tons or less at the minimum. When all aircraft are flying at the maximum rate and ammunition expenditures are the highest conceivable in this kind of war, the division might hit the 600 ton requirement. If on the other hand, it is necessary to pull in the belt--define the hard bases, curtail both flying and shooting--then the consumption comes down dramatically. In short, the division can subsist easily on air resupply while relatively inactive and yet defend itself.

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We would have a corps force with one US and one South Korean Division operating in the northern half of the II Corps. This would permit the regrouping of the 22nd and 23rd divisions so that more ample coverage could be provided in the south and would provide the kind of reaction force required to meet and defeat major Viet Cong attacks. The foregoing deployment relates to the situation as we know it now. If that situation changes or additional forces are introduced by the North Vietnamese, these forces will be shifted correspondingly.

(3) III Corps. This Corps is extremely weak on its northern and eastern flanks and has inadequate reserves to react to heavy Viet Cong attacks, particularly in isolated areas. The Viet Cong attacks in Phuoc Long Province on 10 and 12 June illustrated the dire consequences of a piecemeal commitment of small battalions against a Viet Cong regiment in an intelligence vacuum. There are no prospects of additional South Vietnamese forces in the near future. Thus, we foresee the eventual requirement for a full US Division northeast of Saigon to meet the Viet Cong threat as it is now constituted. In the meanwhile we wish to retain the 173rd Airborne Brigade after the arrival of the Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. If for some reason the Airmobile Division is not deployed, we would station one of the airborne brigades at Pleiku.

(4) IV Corps. At the moment, this Corps is standing on its own two feet. The terrain in the IV Corps lends itself to the full use of air mobility and the absence of cover compounds the difficulty of the Viet Cong. The units of the 7th and 21st Divisions have attained a high state of morale and certain units have achieved an outstanding record against the Viet Cong. We consider that, although the margin is favorable, it is certainly thin. Whether or not US forces will be required in this area cannot now be forecast.

(5) The Viet Cong are destroying battalions faster than they can be reconstituted and faster than they were planned to be organized under the buildup program. The Vietnamese Armed Forces Commanders do not believe that they can survive without the active commitment of US ground combat forces. The only possible US response is the aggressive employment of US troops together with Vietnamese general reserve forces to react against strong Viet Cong/North Vietnamese attacks. To meet this challenge successfully, troops must be maneuvered freely, deployed and redeployed if necessary, and the challenge of Highway 19 and the high plateau must be met.

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(205) MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM MCGEORGE BUNDY, JUNE 19, 1965

Source: Document from the Lyndon Johnson Library

McGeorge Bundy cited the public relations advantages of another bombing pause while recognizing that it could be interpreted by the Communist side as a sign of U.S. desire to negotiate, and would generate pressures for a complete bombing halt.

The Case for Such a Move

1. It will dramatize the good faith of our quest for a peaceful solution.

2. It will further shift the onus for continued hostilities to Hanoi and Peking, if they fail to respond with action.

3. It may allow the USSR increased leverage in pressing Hanoi towards negotiations, if any such inclination exists within the Soviet leadership. (Very doubtful, on the evidence of May).

4. It will permit a more careful testing of Hanoi's interest in negotiations, if any such inclination exists.

5. It will meet one persistent demand of our domestic critics and waverers.

6. It will ease the mounting domestic pressures on our allies (primarily the British and the Japanese, but also the Australians and Canadians) to stop their support of our Vietnam policy.

7. It will meet some persistent objections of unaligned nations and leaders (primarily the Indians and U Thant).

8. It will somewhere de-fuse the Algerian meeting by strengthening our supporters and putting the heat on our adversaries.

The Case Against Such a Move

1. It may cause deep apprehension on US determination in the already weakened Saigon Government.

2. It may allow Hanoi to catch its breath, repair damaged communications, and increase its assistance to the Viet Cong.

3. It may appear to the Communist side to be an admission of the ineffectiveness of the bombings and an indication of US desperation for "negotiations now."

4. It will arouse strong criticism among domestic hardliners--particularly among Republicans who are looking for a way to make capital out of any signs of our softness in Vietnam.

5. It might make a return to air-strikes difficult in the context of inevitable international pressure to make the suspension permanent.

(207) MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT BY MCNAMARA, JULY 20, 1965

Source: Document from the Lyndon Johnson Library

After a conference in Saigon with Westmoreland and Taylor, McNamara expressed the view that a "favorable outcome", which would leave Saigon in control of virtually all of South Vietnam with a disarmed, quiescent Communist movement would be more likely to come without a negotiated settlement than with one. He called for a large expansion of the US presence to stave off defeat, bringing the U.S. force level up to 175,000 or 200,000 men, while citing the possibility of the DRV sending several divisions into the South to counter the U.S. buildup. On July 28, Johnson announced that US troop strength in South Vietnam would be increased from 75,000 to 125,000.

SUBJECT: Recommendations of additional deployments to Vietnam

1. Introduction. Our object in Vietnam is to create conditions for a favorable outcome by demonstrating to the VC/DRV that the odds are against their winning. We want to create these conditions, if possible, without causing the war to expand into one with China or the Soviet Union and in a way which preserves support of the American people and, hopefully, of our allies and friends. The following assessments, trade following my trip to Vietnam and Ambassador designate Lodge and General Wheeler and my own aid are addressed to the achievement of that object. My specific recommendations appear in Paragraph 5; they are concurred by Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador designate Lodge, Ambassador Johnson, General Wheeler, Admiral Sharp and General Westmoreland. I have neither asked for nor obtained their concurrence in other portions of the paper.

2. Favorable outcome: To my view, a "favorable outcome" for purposes of these assessments and recommendations has nine fundamental elements.

a. VC stop attacks and drastically reduce incidents of terror and sabotage.

b. DRV reduces infiltration to a trickle, with some reasonably reliable method of our obtaining confirmation of this fact.

c. US/GVN stop bombing of North Vietnam.

d. GVN stays independent (hopefully pro-US, but possibly genuinely neutral).

e. GVN exercising governmental functions over substantially all of South Vietnam.

f. Communists remain quiescent in Laos and Thailand.

g. DRV withdraw PAVN forces and other North Vietnamese infiltration (not regroupees) from South Vietnam.

h. VC/NLF transform from a military to a purely political organization.

i. US combat forces (not advisors or AID) withdraw.

A favorable outcome could include also arrangements, regarding elections, relations between North and South Vietnam, participation in peace-keeping by international forces, membership for North and South Vietnam in the UN, and so on. The nine fundamental elements can evolve with or without an express agreement and, except for what might be negotiated incidental to a cease-fire, are more likely to evolve without an express agreement than with one. We do not need now to address the question whether ultimately we would settle for something less than the nine fundamentals; because deployment of the forces recommended in paragraph 5 is prerequisite to the achievement of any acceptable settlement, and a decision can be made later, when bargaining becomes a reality, whether to compromise in any particular.

The other role which has been suggested for U.S. ground forces is the occupation and defense of key enclaves along the coast such as Quang Ngai, Qui Nhon, Tuy Hoa and Nha Trang. Such a disposition would have the advantage of placing our forces in areas of easy access and egress with minimum logistic problems associated with supply and maintenance. The presence of our troops would assure the defense of these important key areas and would relieve some GVN forces for employment elsewhere. The troops would not be called upon to engage in counterinsurgency operation except in their own local defense and hence would be exposed to minimum losses.

On the other hand, they would be engaged in a rather inglorious static defensive mission unappealing to them and unimpressive in the eyes of the Vietnamese. Operating in major population areas would maximize the points of contact with Vietnamese and hence maximize the possible points of friction. The division would be badly fragmented to the extent that its command, control and supervision would be awkward.

The foregoing analysis leads me to the following tentative conclusions. First, it is not desirable to introduce a U.S. division into South Vietnam unless there are clear and tangible advantages outweighing the numerous disadvantages, many of which have noted above. One must make a definite determination of the numbers and types of GVN forces relived by the introduction of the U.S. unit and thus the effect of the increased U.S. presence in closing the manpower gap of 1965. Obviously, our division would make some contribution but it remains to be proved that it will be sufficient to reverse the downward trend and give such a lift to the GVN forces that they would perform better by the stimulation of the U.S. presence rather than worse in a mood of relaxation as passing the Viet Cong burden to the U.S.

If the evidence of the probable effectiveness of this U.S. contribution is convincing, then the matter of mission becomes the primary question. The inland mission in the highlands is clearly the more ambitious and, if well done, will make a greater contribution during the present critical period. On the other hand, it is the more exposed and even permits one to entertain the possibility of a kind of Dien Bien Phu if the coastal provinces should collapse and our forces were cut off from the coast except by air.

The coastal enclave mission is safer, simpler but less impressive and less productive than the inland mission. The contrast of the pros and cons of the two suggests the desirability of reexamining the question to see whether the advantages of the inland disposition could not be combined in some way with the retention of a base coastal area, linked with a position inland. In any case, considerable additional study is required before we are prepared to make a recommendation either for the introduction of a division or for the assignment of its mission. In the meantime, we should be giving much thought both in South Vietnam and in Washington as to the right course of action (if) and when this issue becomes pressing--as it shortly will.

(196) NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 328, APRIL 6, 1965

Source: *The Pentagon Papers*, pp. 442-443.

In March the Joint Chiefs proposed that U.S. troops be used in active combat in South Vietnam, as recommended by General Johnson. On April 6 President agreed to General Johnson's program of military action in Vietnam, including additional deployment of U.S. troops and a change in their missions to one of active combat. But he insisted that the new policy be portrayed to the public as being "wholly consistent" with past policy.

On Thursday, April 1, the President made the following decisions with respect to Vietnam:

1. Subject to modifications in the light of experience, and to coordination and direction both in Saigon and in Washington, the President approved the 41-point program of non-military actions submitted by Ambassador Taylor in a memorandum dated March 31, 1965.

2. The President gave general approval to the recommendations submitted by Mr. Rowan in his report dated March 16, with the exception that the President withheld approval of any request for supplemental funds at this time--it is his decision that this program is to be energetically supported by all agencies and departments and by the reprogramming of available funds as necessary within USIA.

3. The President approved the urgent exploration of the 12 suggestions for covert and other actions submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence under date of March 31.

4. The President repeated his earlier approval of the 21-point program of military actions submitted by General Harold K. Johnson under date of March 14 and re-emphasized his desire that aircraft and helicopter reinforcements under this program be accelerated.

5. The President approved an 18-20,000 man increase in U.S. military support forces to fill out existing units and supply needed logistic personnel.

6. The President approved the deployment of two additional Marine Battalions and one Marine Air Squadron and associated headquarters and support elements.

7. The President approved a change of mission for all Marine Battalions deployed to Vietnam to permit their more active use under conditions to be established and approved by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of State.

8. The President approved the urgent exploration, with the Korean, Australian, and New Zealand Governments, of the possibility of rapid deployment of significant combat elements from their armed forces in parallel with the additional Marine deployment approved in paragraph 6.

9. Subject to continuing review, the President approved the following general framework of continuing action against North Vietnam and Laos:

We should continue roughly the present slowly ascending tempo of ROLLING THUNDER operations, being prepared to add strikes in response to a higher rate of VC operations, or conceivably to slow the pace in the unlikely event VC slacked off sharply for what appeared to be more than a temporary operational lull.

The target systems should continue to avoid the effective GCI range of MIGs. We should continue to vary the types of targets, stepping up attacks on lines of communication in the near future, and possibly moving in a few weeks to attacks on the rail lines north and northeast of Hanoi.

Leaflet operations should be expanded to obtain maximum practicable psychological effect on the North Vietnamese population.

Blockade or aerial mining of North Vietnamese ports need further study and should be considered for future operations. It would have major political complications, especially in relation to the Soviets and other third countries, but also offers many advantages.

Air operations in Laos, particularly route blocking operations in the Panhandle area, should be stepped up to the maximum remunerative rate.

10. Ambassador Taylor will promptly seek the reactions of the South Vietnamese Government to appropriate sections of this program and their approval as necessary, and in the event of disapproval or difficulty at that end, these decisions will be appropriately reconsidered. In any event, no action into Vietnam under paragraphs 6 and 7 above should take place without GVN approval or further Presidential authorization.

11. The President desires that with respect to the actions in paragraphs 5 through 7, premature publicity be avoided by all possible precautions. The actions themselves should be taken as rapidly as practicable, but in ways that should minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy, and official statements on these troop movements will be made only with the direct approval of the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State. The President's desire is that these movements and changes should be understood as being gradual and wholly consistent with existing policy.

(203) CIA MEMORANDUM, "REACTIONS TO A FURTHER US BUILDUP IN SOUTH VIETNAM," JUNE 10, 1965

Source: Document from the Lyndon Johnson Library

The CIA viewed a build-up of US forces in South Vietnam to 150,000 men as likely to give it the stigma of an "army of occupation with colonialist ambitions." It calculated that it would not change the Communists' belief in ultimate victory.

1. In this memorandum we consider foreign reactions to an assumed US buildup to 150,000 troops in Vietnam as compared with the 50,000 now present and the 70,000 level due to be reached in August. We assume that no comprehensive public announcement of force goals would be made, and that foreign opinion would be reacting to a gradual perception of the US course of action.

2. Our main conclusions are that this strengthening of the US commitment would make some impression on the Communists, and would raise some dangers in our relations with the South Vietnamese, but that the important reactions would come later, when the effectiveness of the total US effort was tested in combat. These considerations are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Reactions in South Vietnam

3. The initial reactions of the South Vietnamese would be somewhat ambivalent: encouragement over the reinforcement, accompanied by some tendency to relax and let the US do the fighting. Much would depend upon the way in which US troops were employed. If used to clear and hold large areas, particularly heavily populated areas, the US forces would tend to acquire both the responsibility for the war and the stigma of an army of occupation with colonialist ambitions. This tendency would be less if the US forces were used in a mobile fashion to assist ARVN units, and shared in the most difficult fighting.

4. Ultimately, of course, the key determinanet would be the effectiveness of the total US effort, political, economic, and diplomatic, as well as military. If this produced a slackening of VC pressures, US-South Vietnamese working relations would be fairly smooth. If, on the contrary, the war dragged on without respite, war weariness and anti-Americanism would probably begin to threaten the US political base in South Vietnam.

Communist Reactions

5. Viet Cong and DRV. We believe that a US buildup itself, on the scale considered here, would not alter VC/DRV determination to prosecute the struggle. The Communists would recognize that, in military terms, their task had become harder. They would recognize that, in political terms, the US action reaffirmed its determination not to accept military defeat. But the arrival of US forces in these numbers would not change the Communists' basic calculation that their staying power is inherently superior to that of Saigon and Washington.

6. The real test, then, would be that of combat. The Viet Cong would respond, as it has to past injections of US forces, by stepping up the insurgency, and the DRV would reinforce it as necessary with men and equipment, including further line units of the PAVN. In this effort, the Communists would probably hold to their present strategy of attrition and subversion, although on a significantly increased scale. They would still seek to defeat the GVN through exhaustion and internal collapse without letting US/GVN forces engage them in decisive battle.

7. We do not know how the test of combat would come out at the level of US involvement now being considered. If, at this or some higher level, the tide of battle runs against the Viet Cong for a substantial period, the Communists would probably consider a large-scale ground offensive by DRV troops. They would recognize, however, that the enlarged US forces had made this more difficult. They would also fear that the US, with a very heavy stake in the war, would not accept defeat in that new kind of war without expanding it to the DRV and China. In these circumstances, they would probably prefer to resort to negotiations or simply to let the fighting subside while conserving their own forces. They would be particularly likely to react in this way if they had become convinced that in any enlarged war, the US would use nuclear weapons.

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8. China. Peiping would react to the assumed US buildup by urging the VC and the DRV to continue the struggle. It would promise to come to Hanoi's aid if the US involvement reached the point of an invasion of North Vietnam. It might also make some troop movements in South China to underscore this commitment. We believe that as the fighting continued, China would be even less ready than the DRV to conclude that larger US ground forces could turn the tide.

9. The USSR. As the US commitment grew, the Soviet Union would find its problems growing more acute. Moscow would recognize that its own military assistance, and its general shift to a hard, anti-US line, had failed to turn the US from its course. We believe that the Soviets would see no alternative to continued support for the DRV. In time, however, the risks of a prolonged and intensifed war in Vietnam might press hard on the new collective leadership and face Moscow with the choice of further deepening its commitments and aid or moving toward withdrawal.

Non-Communist Reactions

10. A wide sector of non-Communist world opinion doubts that the US can avoid eventual defeat in Vietnam. In this sector, an increasing injection of US forces would be seen as a prolongation of the agony and an increase in the risks of future escalation. Governments which now support the US course, such as the British, Italians, and Japanese, would come under renewed domestic criticism. Governments which oppose the US, such as France and India, would step up their pressures for negotiations. In general, however, these world reactions to more dramatic events, such as a change in the scope of the air war. The ultimate effect upon the US position would continue to be determined by the eventual success or failure of US policy in the Vietnamese war.

Reactions to Use of ROK Forces

11. The South Vietnamese would not be unreservedly receptive to increased ROK contingents in their midst. Greater ROK troop commitments probably would not cause serious repercussions in South Korea, though some mutterings would be heard. In the event of major ROK troop losses, it is likely that public sentiment in South Korea--stimulated by Pyongyang radio and domestic oppositionists--would begin to question the judgment of President Park, thereby contributing to the endemic political instability in South Korea. North Korea, through propaganda and troop movements, and possibly, contrived incidents in the Korean DMZ area would attempt to heighten any insecurity among South Koreans that developed as a result of troop shifts to Southeast Asia.

(204) MESSAGE FROM WESTMORELAND TO SHARP, JUNE 14, 1965

Source: Document from the Lyndon Johnson Library

Westmoreland outlined his concept of deployment of the U.S. forces he had just requested: to employ them as a "general reserve" for both reaction and search and destroy missions against Communist main force units. U.S. troops would do most of their fighting in remote areas far from the population.

1. There has been an extended exchange of messages regarding the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese threat, the requirement for U.S. forces, the concept of their employment and the details of their deployment. I propose to treat each of these matters in an effort to bring the picture into closer focus.

2. The Threat. State message 287 of 11 June 1965 raises questions about my current estimate of the seriousness of the situation in South Vietnam. This message will be answered separately by an Embassy telegram reflecting my views. Suffice it to say that the South Vietnamese have lost five infantry battalions on the battlefield in the last three weeks while rising casualties and high desertion rates have caused a moratorium to be proposed in connection with the formation of new battalions. Thus, the South Vietnamese battlefield strength is declining in the face of North Vietnamese reinforcements and a Viet Cong offensive. It is my considered opinion that the South Vietnamese Armed Forces cannot stand up to this pressure without substantial U.S. combat support on the ground.

3. Force Requirements. I have asked for added forces. These consist of two battalions to round out the 3rd Marine Division, a South Korean Division, an Airmobile Division, the retention of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, tactical fighters and a corps headquarters plus combat and logistic support forces. We have also flagged the possibility of additional forces.

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THE "TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION"
1964

Whereas naval units of the Communist regime in Vietnam, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, have deliberately and repeatedly attacked United States naval vessels lawfully present in international waters, and have thereby created a serious threat to international peace; and

Whereas these attacks are part of a deliberate and systematic campaign of aggression that the Communist regime in North Vietnam has been waging against its neighbors and the nations joined with them in the collective defense of their freedom; and

Whereas the United States is assisting the people of southeast Asia to protect their freedom and has no territorial, military or political ambitions in that area, but desires only that these peoples should be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. **That the Congress approves and supports the determination of the President, as Commander in Chief, to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.**

Sec. 2. The United States regards as vital to its national interest and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia. Consonant with the Constitution of the United States and the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with its obligations under the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, the United States is, therefore, prepared, as the President determines, to take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force, to assist any member or protocol state of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty requesting assistance in defense of its freedom.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall expire when the President shall determine that the peace and security of the area is reasonably assured by international conditions created by action of the United Nations or otherwise, except that it may be terminated earlier by concurrent resolution of the Congress.

[The resolution was passed by a vote of 446 to 0 in the House and 88 to 2 in the Senate.]

The Blank Check

On August 5, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson sent a message to Congress in which he reported that the North Vietnamese had made unprovoked attacks on American vessels in international waters in the Tonkin Gulf. These attacks exemplified, said the President, a "steadily more threatening attitude" of the Communist regime that ruled North Vietnam and constantly attempted to infiltrate the South.

Johnson asked Congress for a joint resolution to express "the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and protecting peace in Southeast Asia." He assured Congress that the United States "intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war."

Immediately Congress responded affirmatively, with a unanimous vote in the House and only two dissenting votes in the Senate.

One of the contrary votes was that of Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon. In the debate over the Tonkin Gulf Resolution he argued that the United States had provoked North Vietnamese attacks by arming South Vietnam over a ten-year period. Furthermore, he wondered whether the American destroyers that had been attacked were engaged in an entirely peaceful mission.

Senator Morse's suspicions about the Tonkin Gulf incident were later corroborated. The Pentagon Papers (see p. 209) revealed that American planes manned by South Vietnamese pilots had made heavy raids on North Vietnam before the Tonkin Bay incident occurred, and the American destroyers were attacked while supporting bombardment of North Vietnamese positions by South Vietnamese warships.

Even more serious than the question of whether the President lied about the Tonkin Bay incident was the fact that through the resolution Johnson gained a blank check from Congress, giving him the power to take the United States to war. In 1965 he cashed the check, first by bombing North Vietnam, and then by sending American combat troops whose number eventually reached half a million men.

Explanatory Note

"the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty." This treaty, the brain-child of American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, was an agreement signed at Manila in September 1954 by representatives of the United States, Great Britain, France, New Zealand, Australia, Pakistan, and Thailand. Inspired by fear of the People's Republic of China, it was designed to provide for the defense of Southeast Asia. It set up a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization SEATO that superficially resembled the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but was much weaker. It lacked a unified command, independent military force, and close organization. Furthermore, India, Burma, Indonesia, Ceylon, and Malaysia refused to join.

(194) LAO DONG PARTY STUDY DOCUMENT FOR POLITICAL REORIENTATION, MARCH 5, 1965 (Extract)

Source: *Tinh Hinh Moi, Nhiem Vu Moi*, (New Situation, New Task). Training Committee of South Vietnam, 1965. Document No. 921 in the Pike Collection, pp. 8-11. [Translated by the Editor].

Warning its members that the situation in the South might go through "complex changes" in 1965. Vietnamese Party leaders suggested that the struggle there would probably be long and drawn out. But their analysis minimized the possibility of the U.S. actually sending troops to the South.

Entering 1965, we can see clearly that the special war of the U.S. in the South is on a deadened course, the puppet government (one line illegible) is extremely wobbly, the central puppet government is not stable, and internal contradictions are becoming very bitter, its authority has greatly declined. The puppet government from the top down is in confusion and shaken and is suffering serious disintegration at the base. The enemy's troops are being annihilated and cannot be replaced fast enough; its morale has fallen seriously. Their pool for military replacements is much reduced. This shows us that through 1965 we can win a much bigger victory than in 1964 if we are determined to make every effort to develop more rapidly our armed and political forces, further gain the initiative in the cities, further consolidate the liberated zone, and fight to wear down and annihilate the enemy more strongly with more big battles, making the enemy's main forces disintegrate.

Now, due to the fact that we are not yet strong enough to defeat the enemy but have accumulated real strength, U.S. imperialism sees that it cannot win but has not yet accepted defeat.

U.S. imperialism is discussing the following options:

1. Widening the war to the North and attacking Southern China. When thinking about this idea, they see all the more danger because will come up against the socialist camp, with China and its 700 million people who now have the atomic bomb. They also know that they don't have enough troops and they know they would not be supported by Britain, France, Germany and Japan. This possibility is therefore very slight but the enemy has thought about it so we must also be highly vigilant and be prepared for any possible adventurism.

2. Send U.S. troops to South Vietnam to become the primary force to fight us. This possibility is also small because they would have to make enormous expenditures in money and material, but would still not be certain of victory, and if they are defeated, they would lose even more face. As for us, if they send U.S. troops, there will be new difficulties and complicities but we will be determined to fight protractedly and, finally, victory will be ours.

3. Besides the above two options, they are discussing a great deal a third option which is to maintain special war as at present but to increase one step. In order to carry out this option, U.S. imperialism is striving mightily to create a position of strength militarily and trying to stabilize the political situation in the cities. They try to achieve these two objectives in order to continue to defeat us militarily while at the same time preparing for a political solution on the basis of their position strength and in accord with their cunning plan.

In the near future, the enemy may carry out bolder military actions in the South and step up provocations against the North.

We must point out the enemy's schemes in order not to become subjective and to increase our vigilance. But at the same time we must also see that, the enemy has met many difficulties in his special war, and therefore many possibilities favorable to the revolution have appeared.

We are on the road to victory but not yet strong enough to finish off the enemy. The enemy has encountered defeat and extreme difficulty. However, the enemy still has many schemes and much strength to cope with us. Therefore the situation in the South at present still go through complex changes. Therefore: our task at present is: exploit the opportune moment, win time, on the basis of the longterm revolutionary standpoint, fighting protractedly, our entire party, army and people unit as one mind, concentrate our forces and determinedly fight the enemy, rapidly build our forces, make 1965 a turning point in the comparison of forces favorable to us, and make it the basis for dashing to win a decisive victory.

(195) TELEGRAM FROM TAYLOR TO RUSK, MARCH 18, 1965

Source: *The Pentagon Papers*, pp. 445-447.

Responding to the issue of sending large-scale U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam, first raised by Army Chief of Staff General Harold Johnson after his trip to South Vietnam earlier in March, Taylor doubted that it would raise the overall level of ARVN performance and pointed out serious disadvantages, including the appearance of having assumed the role of "alien colonizer and conquerer." He called for further study before any recommendation would be made.

General Westmoreland has just sought my concurrence in his recommendation for the landing of the Third BLT of the 9th MEB at Phu Bai for the purpose of protecting the 8th RRU and the air strip there. He intends to move helicopters from Da Nang to the strip and thereby reduce field congestion to Da Nang. Because of the military advantages of thus rounding out the MEB, I have no reluctance in agreeing to the merit of his recommendation which, of course, should receive the concurrence of the GVN after that of Washington.

This proposal for introducing the BLT is a reminder of the strong likelihood of additional requests for increases in U.S. ground combat forces in SVN. Such requests may come from the U.S. side, from the GVN side or from both. All of us here are keenly aware of the GVN trained military manpower shortage which will exist throughout 1965 and which probably can be rectified only in part by an accelerated mobilization. We will soon have to decide whether to try to get by with inadequate indigenous forces or to supplement them with Third Country troops, largely if not exclusively U.S. This matter was discussed with General Johnson during his recent visit who no doubt has raised it following his return to Washington. This message examines the pros and cons of such an action--specifically defined as the introduction of a U.S. division (appropriately modified) into SVN.

The purpose of introducing of a division would be primarily to relieve the present shortage of ARVN units either by replacing ARVN in the defense of key installations or by engaging in active operations against the VC in conjunction with ARVN. Such a reinforcement would allow a strengthening of military efforts in the I and II Corps areas where the situation is deteriorating and would give a boost to GVN morale, military and civilian. Likewise, it should end any talk of a possible U.S. withdrawal and convince Hanoi of the depth of our resolve to see this thing through to a successful conclusion. This statement of the purpose of introducing a U.S. division is, in effect, a tabulation of the arguments in favor of so doing. However, there are counter arguments on the other side of the case. The introduction of a U.S. division obviously increases U.S. involvement in the counterinsurgency, exposes greater forces and invites greater losses. It will raise sensitive command questions with our GVN allies and may encourage them to an attitude of "let the United States do it." It will increase our vulnerability to Communist propaganda and Third Country criticism as we appear to assume the old French role of alien colonizer and conqueror. Finally, there is considerable doubt that the number of GVN forces which our action would relieve would have any great significance in reducing the manpower gap.

It is possible to reach a conclusion with regard to the overall merit of this action without first examining in some detail the possible missions which could be assigned a U.S. division. There are two obvious possibilities: the first, the assignment of the division to one or more of the provinces of the high plateau where the climate is good, the terrain relatively open, and the Montagnard population more readily distinguishable from the alien Viet Cong. Here, our forces could utilize their mobility and firepower effectively and make an important contribution in cutting off the growing infiltration into and through this area. For the most part, the Montagnards are friendly to the U.S. and our forces would thus be operating in a relatively friendly environment.

On the other hand, such a mission in the highlands would place our forces in an area with highly exposed lines of communication leading to the coast. Their location in this area would create serious logistic problems because of the difficulty of the movement of land transport through areas infested by the Viet Cong. There would be problems both of reinforcement and of withdrawal because of this precariousness of land communications. Finally, the GVN may question the introduction of sizeable U.S. forces into the Montagnard area where we have often been accused of favoring the Montagnards over the Vietnamese and of encouraging Montagnard separatism.

To ignore that reality will not only be immensely costly in terms of American lives and resources but it may also draw us inexorably into some variation of the unenviable position in Vietnam which was formerly occupied by the French. We are not, of course, at that point at this time. But the great increase in American military commitment this year has tended to point us in that general direction and we may well begin to slide rapidly toward it if any of the present remedies begin to falter in practice.

As indicated, our planning appears to be predicated on the assumption that existing internal problems in South Vietnam will remain about the same and can be overcome by greater effort and better techniques. But what if the problems do not remain the same? To all outward appearances, little if any thought has been given in Saigon at least, to the possibilities of a change in the nature of the problems themselves. Nevertheless, they are very real possibilities and the initiative for instituting change rests in enemy hands largely because of the weakness of the Saigon government. The range of possible change includes a step-up in the infiltration of cadres and supplies by land or sea. It includes the use of part or all of the regular armed forces of North Vietnam, reported to be about 300,000 strong, under Vo Nguyen Giap. It includes, in the last analysis, the possibility of a major increase in any of many possible forms of Chinese Communist support for the Vietcong.

None of these possibilities may materialize. It would be folly, however, not to recognize their existence and to have as much clarification in advance of what our response to them will be if they do.

This sort of anticipatory thinking cannot be undertaken with respect to the situation in Vietnam alone. The problem there can be grasped, it seems to me, only as we have clearly in mind our interests with respect to all of Southeast Asia. If it is essential in our own interests to maintain a quasi-permanent position of power on the Asian mainland as against the Chinese then we must be prepared to continue to pay the present cost in Vietnam indefinitely and to meet any escalation on the other side with at least a commensurate escalation of commitment of our own. This can go very far, indeed, in terms of lives and resources. Yet if it is essential to our interests then we would have no choice.

But if on the other hand it is, at best, only desirable rather than essential that a position of power be maintained on the mainland, then other courses are indicated. We would, then, properly view such improvement as may be obtained by the new approach in Vietnam primarily in terms of what it might contribute to strengthening our diplomatic hand in the Southeast Asian region. And we would use that hand as vigorously as possible and in every way possible not to deepen our costly involvement on the Asian mainland but to lighten it.

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(109) REPORT OF THE MCNAMARA-TAYLOR MISSION TO SOUTH VIETNAM, October 2, 1963 (Extract)

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations, Book 12*, pp. 554-573.

McNamara and Taylor returned from their visit to South Viet-nam with the conclusion that the war effort had made "great progress" since the beginning of 1962, but that it was doubtful that Diem and Nhu had sufficient support from the urban elite to win the war. They called for a program of selected pressures on Diem through withholding of aid funds and a public posture of disapproval of Diem's repression.

Your memorandum of 21 September 1963 directed that General Taylor and Secretary McNamara proceed to South Vietnam to appraise the military and paramilitary effort to defeat the Viet Cong and to consider, in consultation with Ambassador Lodge, related political and social questions. You further directed that, if the prognosis in our judgment was not hopeful, we should present our views of what action must be taken by the South Vietnam Government and what steps our Government should take to lead the Vietnamese to that action.

Accompanied by representatives of the State Department, CIA, and your Staff, we have conducted an intensive program of visits to key operational area, supplemented by discussions with U.S. officials in all major U.S. Agencies as well as officials of the GVN and third countries.

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We have also discussed our findings in detail with Ambassador Lodge, and with General Harkins and Admiral Felt.

The following report is concurred in by the Staff Members of the mission as individuals, subject to the exceptions noted.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions.

1. The military campaign has made great progress and continues to progress.

2. There are serious political tensions in Saigon (and perhaps elsewhere in South Vietnam) where the Diem-Nhu government is becoming increasingly unpopular.

3. There is no solid evidence of the possibility of a successful coup, although assassination of Diem or Nhu is always a possibility.

4. Although some, and perhaps an increasing number, of GVN military officers are becoming hostile to the government and at least for the near future they will continue to perform their military duties.

5. Further repressive actions by Diem and Nhu could change the present favorable military trends. On the other hand, a return to more moderate methods of control and administration, unlikely though it may be, would substantially mitigate the political crisis.

6. It is not clear that pressures exerted by the U.S. will move Diem and Nhu toward moderation. Indeed, pressures may increase their obduracy. But unless such pressures are exerted, they are almost certain to continue past patterns of behavior.

B. Recommendations.

We recommend that:

1. General Harkins review with Diem the military changes necessary to complete the military campaign in the Northern and Central areas (I, II, and III Corps) by the end of 1954, and in the Delta (IV Corps) by the end of 1965. This review would consider the need for such changes as:

    a. A further shift of military emphasis and strength to the Delta (IV Corps).

    b. An increase in the military tempo in all corps areas, so that all combat troops are in the field an average of 20 days out of 30 and static missions are ended.

    c. Emphasis on "clear and hold operations" instead of terrain sweeps which have little permanent value.

    d. The expansion of personnel in combat units to full authorized strength.

    e. The training and arming of hamlet militia at an accelerated rate, especially in the Delta.

    f. A consolidation of the strategic hamlet program, especially in the Delta, and action to insure that future strategic hamlets are not built until they can be protected, and until civic action programs can be introduced.

2. A program be established to train Vietnamese so that essential functions now performed by U.S. military personnel can be carried out by Vietnamese by the end of 1965. It should be possible to withdraw the bulk of U.S. personnel by that time.

3. In accordance with the program to train progressively Vietnamese to take over military functions, the Defense Department should announce in the very near future presently prepared plans to withdraw 1000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963. This action should be explained in low key as an initial step in a long-term program to replace U.S. personnel with trained Vietnamese without impairment of the war effort.

4. The following actions be taken to impress upon Diem our disapproval of his political program.

    a. Continue to withhold commitment of funds in the commodity import program, but avoid a formal announcement. The potential significance of the withholding of commitments for the 1964 military budget should be brought home to the top military officers in working level contacts between USOM and MACV and the Joint General Staff; up to now we have stated $95 million may be used by the Vietnamese as a planning level for the commodity

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import program for 1964. Henceforth we could make clear that this is uncertain both because of lack of final appropriation action by the Congress and because of executive policy.

b. Suspend approval of the pending AID loans for the Saigon-Cholon Waterworks and Saigon Electric Power Project. We should state clearly that we are doing so as a matter of policy.

c. Advise Diem that MAP and CIA support for designated units, now under Colonel Tung's control (mostly held in or near the Saigon area for political reasons) will be cut off unless these units are promptly assigned to the full authority of the Joint General Staff and transferred to the field.

d. Maintain the present purely "correct" relations with the top GVN, and specifically between the Ambassador and Diem. Contact between General Harkins and Diem and Defense Secretary Thuan on military matters should not, however, be suspended, as this remains an important channel of advice. USOM and USIA should also seek to maintain contacts where these are needed to push forward programs in support of the effort in the field, while taking care not to cut across the basic picture of U.S. disapproval and uncertainty of U.S aid intentions. We should work with the Diem government but not support it.[1]

As we pursue these courses of action, the situation must be closely watched to see what steps Diem is taking to reduce repressive practices and to improve the effectiveness of the military effort. We should set no fixed criteria, but recognize that we would have to decide in 2 - 4 months whether to move to more drastic action or try to carry on with Diem even if he had not taken significant steps.

5. At this time, no initiative should be taken to encourage actively a change in government. Our policy should be to seek urgently to identify and build contacts with an alternative leadership if and when it appears.

6. The following statement be approved as current U.S. policy toward South Vietnam and constitute the substance of the government position to be presented both in Congressional testimony and in public statements.

a. The security of South Vietnam remains vital to United States security. For this reason, we adhere to the overriding objective of denying this country to Communism and of suppressing the Viet Cong insurgency as promptly as possible. (By suppressing the insurgency we mean reducing it to proportions manageable by the national security forces of the GVN, unassisted by the presence of U.S. military forces.) We believe the U.S. part of the task can be completed by the end of 1965, the terminal date which we are taking as the time objective of our counterinsurgency programs.

b. The military program in Vietnam has made progress and is sound in principle.

c. The political situation in Vietnam remains deeply serious. It has not yet significantly affected the military effort, but could do so at some time in the future. If the result is a GVN ineffective in the conduct of the war, the U.S. will review its attitude toward support for the government. Although we are deeply concerned by repressive practices, effective performance in the conduct of the war should be the determining factor in our relations with the GVN.

d. The U.S. has expressed its disapproval of certain actions of the Diem-Nhu regime and will do so again if required. Our policy is to seek to bring about the abandonment of repression because of its effect on the popular will to resist. Our means consist of expressions of disapproval and the withholding of support from GVN activities that are not clearly contributing to the war effort. We will use these means as required to assure an effective military program.

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[1] Mr. Colby believes that the official "correct" relationship should be supplemented by selected and restricted unofficial and personal relationships with individuals in the GVN, approved by the Ambassador, where persuasion could be fruitful without derogation of the official U.S. posture.

(115) NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 263, BY MCGEORGE BUNDY, October 11, 1963

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations*, Book 12, p. 578.

At the same October 5 NSC meeting, Kennedy approved the military recommendations of the Taylor-McNamara mission.

At a meeting on October 5, 1963, the President considered the recommendations contained in the report of Secretary McNamara and Gereral Taylor on their mission to South Vietnam.

The President approved the military recommendations contained in Section I B (1-3) of the report, but directed that no formal announcement be made of the implementation of plans to withdraw 1,000 U.S. military personnel by the end of 1963.

After discussion of the remaining recommendations of the report, the President approved an instruction to Ambassador Lodge which is set forth in State Department telegram No. 534 to Saigon.

b. The "massive deterrent US air power" referred to in the paper was designed to provide the North Vietnamese with evidence of the US intent, determination and capability. This "show of force" exercise could be conducted by Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps aircraft deployed to Southeast Asia under *officially deleted* USAF aircraft based at Clark AB, Philippines, other PACOM aircraft using air-to-air refueling, or by SAC training flights. This type of exercise would not dilute other deployments and would serve the dual purpose of providing useful reconnaissance, both photo and visual. The basic posture for nuclear strikes would not be affected since alert aircraft would not be used for the purpose of conducting a show of force operation.

(69) CABLEGRAM FROM GENERAL TAYLOR, IN BAGUIO, THE PHILIPPINES, TO KENNEDY, November 1, 1961

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations, Book 11*, pp. 331-336.

Following his extended visit to South Viet-nam, Kennedy's military adviser, Gen. Maxwell Taylor viewed the conflict primarily in global terms, as a manifestation of Communist global strategy rather than as the result of indigenous Vietnamese forces and decisions. He urged that the U.S. seize the opportunity afforded by the floods in the Mekong Delta to send a military task force to South Viet-nam, primarily as a symbolic show of U.S. presence in the country. Other recommendations included the insertion of American officials into the South Vietnamese government, not as advisers but as actual administrators.

1. Transmitted herewith are a summary of the fundamental conclusions of my group and my personal recommendations in response to the letter of the President to me dated 13 October 1961. At our meeting next Friday I hope to be allowed to explain the thinking which lies behind them. At that time I shall transmit our entire report which will provide detailed support for the recommendations and will serve as a working paper for the interested departments and agencies.

2. It is concluded that:

a. Communist strategy aims to gain control of Southeast Asia by methods of subversion and guerrilla war which by-pass conventional U.S. and indigenous strength on the ground. The interim Communist goal - en route to total takeover - appears to be a neutral Southeast Asia, detached from U.S. protection. This strategy is well on the way to success in Vietnam.

b. In Vietnam (and Southeast Asia) there is a double crisis in confidence: doubt that U.S. is determined to save Southeast Asia; doubt that Diem's methods can frustrate and defeat Communist purposes and methods. The Vietnamese (and Southeast Asians) will undoubtedly draw rightly or wrongly - definitive conclusions in coming weeks and months concerning the probable outcome and will adjust their behaviour accordingly. What the U.S. does or fails to do will be decisive to the end result.

c. Aside from the morale factor, the Vietnamese Government is caught in interlocking circles of bad tactics and bad administrative arrangements which pin their forces on the defensive in ways which permit a relatively small Viet-Cong force (about one tenth the size of the GVN regulars) to create conditions of frustration and terror certain to lead to a political crisis, if a positive turning point is not soon achieved. The following recommendations are designed to achieve that favorable turn, to avoid further deterioration in the situation in South Vietnam, and eventually to contain and eliminate the threat to its independence.

3. It is recommended:

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a. That upon request from the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to come to its aid in resisting the increasing aggressions of the Viet-Cong and in repairing the ravages of the Delta flood which, in combination, threaten the lives of its citizens and the security of the country, the U.S. Government offer to join the GVN in a massive joint effort as a part of a total mobilization of GVN resources to cope with both the Viet-Cong (VC) and the ravages of the flood. The U.S. representatives will participate actively in this effort, particularly in the fields of government administration, military plans and operations, intelligence, and flood relief, going beyond the advisory role which they have observed in the past.

Specific

b. That in support of the foregoing broad commitment to a joint effort with Diem, the following specific measures be undertaken:

(1) The U.S. Government will be prepared to provide individual administrators for insertion into the governmental machinery of South Vietnam in types and numbers to be worked out with President Diem.

(2) A joint effort will be made to improve the military-political intelligence system beginning at the provincial level and extending upward through the government and armed forces to the Central Intelligence Organization.

(3) The U.S. Government will engage in a joint survey of the conditions in the provinces to assess the social, political, intelligence, and military factors bearing on the prosecution of the counter-insurgency in order to reach a common estimate of these factors and a common determination of how to deal with them. As this survey will consume time, it should not hold back the immediate actions which are clearly needed regardless of its outcome.

(4) A joint effort will be made to free the Army for mobile, offensive operations. This effort will be based upon improving the training and equipping of the Civil Guard and the Self-Defense Corps, relieving the regular Army of static missions, raising the level of the mobility of Army forces by the provision of considerably more helicopters and light aviation, and organizing a Border Ranger Force for a long-term campaign on the Laotian border against the Viet-Cong infiltrators. The U.S. Government will support this effort with equipment and with military units and personnel to do those tasks which the Armed Forces of Vietnam cannot perform in time. Such tasks include air reconnaissance and photography, airlift (beyond the present capacity of SVN forces), special intelligence, and air-ground support techniques.

(5) The U.S. Government will assist the GVN in effecting surveillance and control over the coastal waters and inland waterways, furnishing such advisors, operating personnel and small craft as may be necessary for quick and effective operations.

(6) The MAAG, Vietnam, will be reorganized and increased in size as may be necessary by the implementation of these recommendations.

(7) The U.S. Government will offer to introduce into South Vietnam a military Task Force to operate under U.S. control for the following purposes:

(a) Provide a U.S. military presence capable of raising national morale and of showing to Southeast Asia the seriousness of the U.S. intent to resist a Communist take-over.

(b) Conduct logistical operations in support of military and flood relief operations.

(c) Conduct such combat operations as are necessary for self-defense and for the security of the area in which they are stationed.

(d) Provide an emergency reserve to back up the Armed Forces of the GVN in the case of a heightened military crisis.

(e) Act as an advance party of such additional forces as may be introduced if CINCPAC or SEATO contingency plans are invoked.

(8) The U.S. Government will review its economic aid program to take into account the needs of flood relief and to give priority to those projects in support of the expanded counter-insurgency program.

(71) MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT BY MCNAMARA, November 8, 1961

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations, Book 11*, pp. 343-344.

McNamara, supported by the Joint Chiefs, warned Kennedy that the limited commitment recommended by Taylor had to be seen as only the beginning of what might be a long conflict involving North Viet-nam and China directly. He favored accompanying that initial commitment of troops with a warning to Hanoi that they would be punished by the U.S. for continued support of the "Viet Cong." Based on military contingency plans drawn up in 1959, he assured Kennedy that at most about 205,000 U.S. troops would be required, even to deal with overt intervention by Hanoi and Peking - a projection which turned out to be far too optimistic even without Chinese participation in the war.

The basic issue framed by the Taylor Report is whether the U.S. shall:

a. Commit itself to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to Communism, and

b. Support this commitment by necessary immediate military actions and preparations for possible later actions.

The Joint Chiefs, Mr. Gilpatric, and I have reach the following conclusions:

1. The fall of South Vietnam to Communism would lead to the fairly rapid extension of Communist control, or complete accommodation to Communism, in the rest of mainland Southeast Asia and in Indonesia. The strategic implications worldwide, particularly in the Orient, would be extremely serious.

2. The chances are against, probably sharply against, preventing that fall by any measures short of the introduction of U.S. forces on a substantial scale. We accept General Taylor's judgment that the various measures proposed by him short of this are useful but will not in themselves do the job of restoring confidence and setting Diem on the way to winning his fight.

3. The introduction of a U.S. force of the magnitude of an initial 8,000 men in a flood relief context will be of great help to Diem. However, it will not convince the other side (whether the shots are called from Moscow, Peiping or Hanoi) that we mean business. Moreover, it probably will not tip the scales decisively. We would be almost certain to get increasingly mired down in an inconclusive struggle.

4. The other side can be convinced we mean business only if we accompany the initial force introduction by a clear commitment to the full objective stated above, accompanied by a warning through some channel to Hanoi that continued support of the Viet Cong will lead to punitive retaliation against North Vietnam.

5. If we act in this way, the ultimate possible extent of our military commitment must be faced. The struggle may be prolonged and Hanoi and Peiping may intervene overtly. In view of the logistic difficulties faced by the other side, I believe we can assume that the maximum U.S. forces required on the ground in Southeast Asia will not exceed 6 divisions, or about 205,000 men, (CINCPAC Plan 32-59, Phase IV). Our military posture is, or, with the addition of more National Guard or regular Army divisions, can be made, adequate to furnish these forces without serious interference with our present Berlin plans.

6. To accept the stated objective is of course a most serious decision. Military force is not the only element of what must be a most carefully coordinated set of actions. Success will depend on factors many of which are not within our control - notably the conduct of Diem himself and other leaders in the area. Laos will remain a major problem. The domestic political implications of accepting the objective are also grave, although it is our feeling that the country will respond better to a firm initial position than to courses of action that lead us in only gradually, and that in the meantime are sure to involve casualties. The over-all effect on Moscow and Peiping will need careful weighing and may well be mixed; however, permitting South Vietnam to fall can only strengthen and encourage them greatly.

7. In sum:

a. We do not believe major units of U.S. forces should be introduced in South Vietnam unless we are willing to make an affirmative decision on the issue stated at the start of this memorandum.

b. We are inclined to recommend that we do commit the U.S. to the clear objective of preventing the fall of South Vietnam to Communism and that we support this commitment by the necessary military actions.

c. If such a commitment is agreed upon, we support the recommendations of General Taylor as the first steps toward its fulfillment.

(88) REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT ON SOUTHEAST ASIA-VIET NAM BY SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD, December 18, 1962 (Extract)

Source: *Two Reports on Viet Nam and Southeast Asia to the President of the U.S. by Senator Mike Mansfield*, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, April 1973.

After a visit to Southeast Asia, Senator Mike Mansfield, an early and influential supporter of Ngo Dinh Diem, warned President Kennedy that the U.S. was in danger of being sucked into full-scale war against the Communist guerrillas and of setting up "some form of neocolonial rule" in South Viet-nam. He noted that little thought had been given to the possibility of a serious worsening of the situation and advised the President to begin to think in terms of a diplomatic solution which would minimize U.S. involvement on the mainland of Southeast Asia.

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Even assuming that aid over a prolonged period would be available, the question still remains as to the capacity of the present Saigon government to carry out the task of social engineering. Ngo Dinh Diem remains a dedicated, sincere, hardworking, incorruptible and patriotic leader. But he is older and the problems which confront him are more complex than those which he faced when he pitted his genuine nationalism against, first, the French and Bao Dai and then against the sects with such effectiveness. The energizing role which he played in the past appears to be passing to other members of his family, particularly Ngo Dinh Nhu. The latter is a person of great energy and intellect who is fascinated by the operations of political power and has consumate eagerness and ability in organizing and manipulating it. But it is Ngo Dinh Diem, not Ngo Dinh Nhu, who has such popular mandate to exercise power as there is in south Vietnam. In a situation of this kind there is a great danger of the corruption of unbridled power. This has implications far beyond the persistent reports and rumors of fiscal and similar irregularities which are, in any event, undocumented. More important is its effect on the organization of the machinery for carrying out the new concepts. The difficulties in Vietnam are not likely to be overcome by a handful of paid retainers and sycophants. The success of the new approach in Vietnam presupposes a great contribution of initiative and self-sacrifice from a substantial body of Vietnamese with capacities for leadership at all levels. Whether that contribution can be obtained remains to be seen. For in the last analysis it depends upon a diffusion of political power, essentially in a democratic pattern. The trends in the political life of Vietnam have not been until now in that direction despite lip service to the theory of developing democratic and popular institutions "from the bottom up" through the strategic hamlet program.

To summarize, our policies and activities are designed to meet an existing set of internal problems in south Vietnam. North Vietnam infiltrates some supplies and cadres into the south; together with the Vietnamese we are trying to shut off this flow. The Vietcong has had the offensive in guerrilla warfare in the countryside; we are attempting to aid the Vietnamese military in putting them on the defensive with the hope of eventually reducing them at least to ineffectiveness. Finally, the Vietnamese peasants have sustained the Vietcong guerrillas out of fear, indifference or blandishment and we are helping the Vietnamese in an effort to win the peasants away by offering them the security and other benefits which may be provided in the strategic hamlets.

That, in brief, is the present situation. As noted, there is optimism that success will be achieved quickly. My own view is that the problems can be made to yield to present remedies, *provided* the problems and their magnitude do not change significantly and *provided* that the remedies are pursued by both Vietnamese and Americans (and particularly the former) with great vigor and self-dedication.

Certainly, if these remedies do not work, it is difficult to conceive of alternatives, with the possible exception of a truly massive commitment of American military personnel and other resources - in short going to war fully ourselves against the guerrillas - and the establishment of some form of neocolonial rule in south Vietnam. That is an alternative which I most emphatically do not recommend. On the contrary, it seems to me most essential that we make crystal clear to the Vietnamese government and to our own people that while we will go to great lengths to help, the primary responsibility rests with the Vietnamese. Our role is and must remain secondary in present circumstances. It is their country, their future which is most at stake, not ours.

On the second of May, my council of generals met to evaluate the current situation and to determine the needs of the Republic of Vietnam to meet this situation. Their objective evaluation shows that the military situation at present is to the advantage of the communists and that most of the Vietnamese Armed Forces are already committed to internal security and the protection of our 12 million inhabitants. For many months the communist-inspired, fratricidal war has taken nearly one thousand casualties a month on both sides. Documents obtained in a recent operation along route No. 9 which runs from Laos to Vietnam, contain definite proof that 2,860 armed agents have infiltrated among us in the course of the last four months. It is certain that this number rises each day. However, the Vietnamese people are showing the world that they are willing to fight and die for their freedom, notwithstanding the temptations to neutralism and its false promises of peace being drummed into their ears daily by the communists.

In the light of this situation, the council of generals concluded that additional forces numbering slightly over 100,000 more than our new force level of 170,000 will be required to counter the ominous threat of communist domination. The 100,000 reservists to be called up according to the plan of my council of generals were to meet the requirement for an augmentation of the Vietnamese Army by nine infantry divisions plus modest naval and air force increases. First priority called for one division to reinforce each of the three Army Corps in Vietnam plus a two divisional general reserve for a total of five divisions. In second priority, an additional division for each of the three Army Corps plus one in general reserve brought the total to nine new divisions. With the seven existing divisions, fragmented in anti-guerilla operations, the Army of Vietnam would thus have a strength of 16 divisions of slightly less than 10,000 men each plus appropriate combat and logistic support units.

We have now had an opportunity to review this initial force requirement with General McGarr and the MAAG staff who have recommended certain modifications which are basically in consonance with our plan and with which we agree.

After considering the recommendations of our generals and consulting with our American military advisors, we now conclude that to provide even minimum initial resistance to the threat, two new divisions of approximately 10,000 strength each are required to be activated at the earliest possible date. Our lightly held defensive positions along the demilitarized zone at our Northern border is even today being outflanked by communist forces which have defeated the Royal Laotian Army garrisons in Tchepone and other cities in Southern Laos. Our ARVN forces are so thoroughly committed to internal anti-guerilla operations that we have no effective forces with which to counter this threat from Southern Laos. Thus, we need immediately one division for the First Army Corps and one for the Second Army Corps to provide at least some token resistance to the sizeable forces the communists are capable of bringing to bear against our Laotian frontier. Failing this, we would have no recourse but to withdraw our forces southward from the demilitarized zone and sacrifice progressively greater areas of our country to the communists. These divisions should be mobilized and equipped, together with initial logistic support units immediately after completion of activation of the presently contemplated increase of 20,000 which you have offered to support.

Following the activation of these units, which should begin in about five months, we must carry on the program of activation of additional units until over a period of two years we will have achieved a force of 14 infantry divisions, an expanded airborne brigade of approximately division strength and accompanying supporting elements of logistical, naval and air units. In other words, our present needs as worked out with General McGarr's advice and assistance call for a total force of 15 divisional equivalents plus combat and logistic support units instead of our original plan for a 16 division force. The strategic concept and mission of this total 270,000 man force remains the same, namely, to overcome the insurgency which has risen to the scale of a bloody, communist-inspired civil war within our borders and to provide initial resistance to overt, external aggression until free world forces under the SEATO agreement can come to our aid. The question naturally arises as to how long we shall have to carry the burden of so sizeable a military force. Unfortunately, I can see no early prospects for the reduction of such a force once it has been established, for even though we may be successful in liquidating the insurgency within our borders, communist pressure in Southeast Asia and the external military threat to our country must be expected to increase, I fear, before it diminishes. This means that we must be prepared to maintain a strong defensive military posture for at least the foreseeable future in order that we may not become one of the so-called "soft spots" which traditionally have attracted communist aggression. We shall therefore continue to need material support to maintain this force whose requirements far exceed the capacity of our economy to support.

To accomplish this 100,000 man expansion of our military forces which is perfectly feasible from a manpower viewpoint will require a great intensification of our training programs in order to produce, in the minimum of time, those qualified combat leaders and technical specialists needed to fill the new units and to provide to them the technical and logistic support required to insure their complete effectiveness. For this purpose a considerable expansion of the United States Military Advisory Group is an essential requirement. Such an expansion, in the form of selected elements of the American Armed Forces to establish training centers for the Vietnamese Armed Forces, would serve the dual purpose of providing an expression of the United States' determination to halt the tide of communist aggression and of preparing our forces in the minimum of time.

While the Government and people of Vietnam are prepared to carry the heavy manpower burden required to save our country, we must know that we cannot afford to pay, equip, train and maintain such forces as I have described. To make this effort possible, we would need to have assurances that this needed material support would be provided. I have drawn on our past experience of United States support we have received to make some extremely rough estimates of the costs of these proposals.

The costs of providing essential initial equipment to the added forces under the Military Assistance Program would probably be in the neighuorhood of $175,000,000 with deliveries to be distributed over the next two and one-half years as units can be activated. If the United States assumes the task of providing this initial equipment for the additional forces, I understand that the annual Military Assistance Program for force maintenance will increase by about $20 million above the level of MAP support for the presently authorized 170,000 force.

The Vietnamese Military Budget, which includes piaster requirements, must also be supplemented. As you know, Vietnam contributes to this budget to its fullest capability now with respect to existing forces. Despite our best efforts, your Government has largely supported this budget through Defense Support Assistance. Although we have made significant progress in developing our economy in the last four years, the support of even the inadequate armed forces we have has far exceeded the modest capabilities of the economy of our small country. In order to carry out the expansion of forces, the piaster military budget now averaging nearly 7.0 billion piasters a year will have to be supplemented. As I see it, the annual maintenance cost will increase gradually duringing the force implementation and will ultimately level off at approximately 10.60 billion piasters.

This program, I realize, will be expensive in money, equipment and personnel. The benefits to be gained, however, in preventing the subjugation of our free people and in establishing a solid obstacle to the advance of communism, I know you will agree, far outweigh the cost. With your support, we stand determined to survive in independence and freedom.

It goes without saying that in the face of the extremely serious situation created by the communist aggressor, we must temporarily accord priority to the military problems. However, my Government does not attach less importance to economic, political and social problems. At this point the doctrinal position which pertains to South Vietnam is clear and clean. It was expressed in a free and sincere manner in my message to the American Congress in April 1957. It has not varied since. Neither did it vary during the recent presidential campaign when I was elected by a very large majority.

Presently, it is necessary not to be maneuvered by the communists, who exploit our tendency to consider military efforts as reactionary and fruitless, to divert our effective action, which is necessitated by the mortal communist attacks, toward a long range project of economic and social improvement, and which, of course, supposes that we are still alive. We see for the army an economic and social mission along with military role, a conception which rationally responds to the double challenge which the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia have had to face: underdevelopment and communist subversive war. It is along this line that, since my taking office in July 1954, I have undertaken to create an economic infrastructure throughout the country, including the least inhabited regions; to develop the lines of communication with the double purpose of facilitating intercourse and facilitating the mobility of our troops; to increase and diversify the agricultural production; to give each family a tract of land which will belong to them; to create each day more employment by industrializing the country; in brief to open new horizons to the rural masses, the determining factor in the struggle against communism. It is sufficient to consider the product of our exportation these last two years, the reduction of our importation program, to count the factory chimneys which make their appearance to realize the progress already made. On the other hand, in spite of its lack of resources, the Government increases the social investments to respond to the diversified needs of a population which increases at the rate of 3% per year: hospitals in the towns, dispensaries in the villages, primary schools in each commune, secondary schools in each city of whatever importance. Education is developing at the annual rate of 20% while in the domain of public health, we have a hospital bed available for each thousand inhabitants. We want to progress more rapidly but, in addition to the budgetary limitations which constitute a primary obstacle, the lack of trained personnel has made itself felt despite our accelerated training programs. The agrovilles, which I have built in the last year, are another proof of the Government's efforts: These are agricultural communities located between two urban centers to give the rural population the benefits of the commodities of modern life and to correct the extreme dispersion of the population. All foreign observers who travel in the country are struck by the standard of living enjoyed by the mass of peasants: sewing machine, bicycle, transistor radio for each family in more or less comfortable circumstances, theater, movies in the most backward areas, motor boats on the innumerable canals, tricycle passes on all passable roads. And it is precisely in order not to interrupt this development program that we ask for supplementary aid to finance our war effort; otherwise we will be forced to make the tragic decision to abruptly cease all our social and economic programs.

Concerning Cambodia, our diplomatic efforts would have results only if we recognize our adversary.

The idea of Cambodia being afraid of Vietnam is a myth. For 7 years, Sihanouk has not missed one chance to provoke South Vietnam, of which he has militarily occupied six islands. Having no reason to fear a Vietnam, divided and weakened by the subversive communist war, Sihanouk has nothing to fear at all. However, this idea would be pleasing to those who would seek to arbitrate between Cambodia and South Vietnam. It would also be pleasing to certain Vietnamese because this idea is flattering to their vanity and to their infantilism which consists of minimizing the difficulties and proposing any solutions. It would also be pleasing to Sihanouk who has a need to give substance to another myth that of encirclement which he needs to excuse his internal failures in order to justify his presence in power, to accuse the Americans and to court the communists. In reality, Sihanouk is committed intellectually and morally to communism, which he considers the stronger party and the inevitable victor in the future. In spite of the aid which he receives from America, has Sihanouk ever aided the US in the battle with the communists? He always takes positions favorable to the communists against the USA. His conduct in the Laotian affair is clear. Not only does he serve the communists, but he is proud to serve a stronger master. On the other hand, Cambodia, like Laos, is unable to ensure the security of her territory from the communist guerillas because he will not or does not wish to make the appropriate efforts. It is for this reason that he takes refuge in communist servitude under the guise of a neutralist. It is also for that reason that he has always refused to accept any arrangement for the effective control of the Cambodian-Vietnamese border under the fallacious pretext of neutrality.

From the political point of view, the reforms that I have anticipated, that is to say the elective system established at the village level, the creation of the provincial councils, the institution of a High Economic Council, of a National and Social Council - all these measures are tending to assure more and more active participation by the population in public affairs, in the dramatic situation of an underdeveloped country, divided and mortally menaced by communism.

Such is the direction of my efforts and such in our regime - a regime open to progress and not a closed system. I am convinced that with your support and so generously aided by your great, friendly nation, I will manage to reestablish law and order in our provinces, in our villages, to accelerate progress in all other areas for the edification of a society of free men, happy and prosperous. Vietnam thus constitutes a pole of attraction for the countries of Southeast Asia, for those who fight communism as well as for those who still doubt the future of the free world.

I wish to assure you, Mr. President, of the sincerity of my sentiments and most cordial wishes.

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(60) MEMORANDUM FROM THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF TO MCNAMARA, October 5, 1961

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations, Book 11, p. 295-296.*

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, reacting to a step-up in tempo and size of Communist attacks in South Viet-nam, asserted to McNamara that the situation was "rapidly worsening" and that only direct military intervention by U.S. forces could save Southeast Asia from going Communist. Although the words are deleted in the document as published in the Pentagon Papers, it is clear from the context that the reference is to "SEATO Plan 5/61," which called for the commitment of troops to Laos, both to stop infiltration into South Viet-nam and to protect the Lao-Thai border. The Joint Chiefs asserted that this plan could be a countermove to a Soviet denial of access to Berlin, but appeared to be urging its application in any case, on the grounds that Southeast Asia was militarily "critical."

1. Reference is made to the memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 3 October 1961, subject as above.

2. Over a period of time, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have examined various alternatives to the solution of the problems of Laos and Southeast Asia. They have recommended certain military actions short of US intervention which might have had the desired effect and could have altered the situation to our advantage. However, the time is now past when actions short of intervention by outside forces could reverse the rapidly worsening situation. They consider *officially deleted* thereof, to be the military minimum commensurate with the situation. It is the view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that, lacking an acceptable political settlement prior to the resumption of overt hositilities, there is no feasible military alternative of lesser magnitude which will prevent the loss of Laos, South Vietnam and ultimately Southeast Asia.

3. If this intervention causes escalation, additional mobilization would be required in order to maintain our strategic reserve. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirm their opinion that we cannot afford to be preoccupied with Berlin to the extent that we close our eyes to the situation in Southeast Asia, which is now critical from a military viewpoint.

4. Planning by the Joint Chiefs of Staff has contemplated simultaneous contingencies in Berlin and Southeast Asia. In such planning the Joint Chiefs of Staff have agreed that implementation of *officially deleted* would provide a US initiated counter to USSR denial of access to Berlin. The current build-up of forces will improve our military posture to support action in Southeast Asia in addition to that in Berlin. It is not a question of the desirability of having two limited war situations going at the same time. The fact of the matter is that we may be faced with such a contingency.

5. In reply to your two lesser questions:

a. Naval forces in support of *officially deleted* operations would consist of one or two attack carrier strike groups with supporting forces. The employment of these units would not unacceptably reduce Seventh Fleet capabilities in other areas of the Western Pacific. In the event that overt Chinese Communist intervention required the deployment of additional Seventh Fleet forces to Southeast Asia, First Fleet forces and elements of a Marine Division/wing team from the Eastern Pacific could be deployed to maintain the required level of naval capabilities in the Western Pacific. These actions are in consonance with currently approved military plans.

1. Indications are that additional military equipment and training personnel required to accomplish aims and objectives generally agreed upon in VP Johnson's talks with President Diem and other GVN officials will be such as to exceed likely limits to which ICC can realistically be expected to agree.

We therefore think it important that this question be discussed promptly and frankly by both GVN and US with Canadians, British and perhaps French making it clear that we cannot permit Geneva accord restrictions on quantities and types of equipment and on numbers of personnel to hamper effective action for defense of Viet-Nam against Communist threat. Canadian ICC delegation here has already asked Embassy for frank discussion of press reports suggesting US proposing send troops SVN, increase size of MAAG and take other actions which imply serious violations of Geneva accord. We have told Canadians that we will talk to them in near future.

To approach this problem piecemeal by attempting make explanations for each increment in order demonstrate adherence to Geneva accord will only weaken our case when time comes to exceed outside limit of ICC acceptance. We may in fact have reached such limit on personnel since members of Canadian delegation have privately warned that any request for increase in MAAG ceiling likely be doomed to eventual negative response after long hassle which would only benefit Communist propaganda.

We also believe it undesirable to adopt approach that we shall say nothing about further personnel and equipment increases unless asked. It would in any case with respect to equipment be only very short time before ICC, in view its control over entry all shipments into SVN, would begin ask for explanations and Communist propaganda attacks would follow. Thus we would find ourselves on defensive rather than taking psychological offensive with respect our actions.

Therefore strongly believe we should make decision now in conjunction with GVN A) to take public position that in fighting Communist threat to GVN we will no longer observe our self-imposed adherence to restrictions in articles 16 and 17 of Geneva accord and B) talk with our allies in order obtain prior tacit support or at least non-objection to such action. Such action would not only demonstrate our determination support GVN in all-out effort against Communist threat but also shore up morale our friends SEA and strengthen our position vis-a-vis Communists at 14-nation conference by showing that in absence effective international control estemable restrain Communist US prepared take such actions as it deems necessary to preserve independence free nations like Laos and Viet-Nam. Also believe limiting action to articles 16 and 17 would permit ICC continue function on limited basis in Viet-Nam and thus retain such deterrent value against open DRV aggression as ICC may be able provide.

2. After consultation with GVN and allies we would envisage GVN sending letter to ICC along following lines; (A) GVN although not signatory to Geneva accord has voluntarily complied fully with both letter and spirit and given fullest possible cooperation to assure ICC success maintaining peace; (B) ICC, in part because of construction [obstruction] of DRV, unable to fulfill this task; specifically, it has failed take action to control subversion and infiltration into SVN of DRV agents and forces, investigate Kontum attack, stop Soviet airlift through Hanoi and Haiphong, detect control either introduction foreign military personnel or importation of war material into DRV and prevent creation military bases in and near demilitarized zone and in Laos as bases for aggression against SVN (Saigon's G-467); (C) in this situation, given threat to peace not only in Viet-nam but also throughout SEA as result DRV aggressiveness which ICC unable control, GVN required take certain actions in interest of self-defense against threat of Communist aggression and has requested US to assist it in this endeavor; (D) it should be clearly understood that in face present threat to its very existence, GVN can no longer accept limitations imposed by articles 16 and 17, and which ICC unable enforce vis-a-vis DRV, where such limitations restrict GVN in taking defensive action to counter threat to its own security and peace of SEA.

We believe GVN letter should be made public and US should give full support to GVN position in official public statement and seek similar statements from our allies.

3. If Department agrees to above, request prompt authorization discuss subject with GVN and recommend Department subsequently take up with Canadians, British and perhaps French as suggested above. Highly desirable we reach common US-GVN position quickly in order be able meet desire Canadian ICC delegation for early talks.

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(49) TELEGRAM FROM RUSK TO VARIOUS EMBASSIES, May 26, 1961

Source: Document declassified by Department of State December 3, 1974.

Taking Nolting's advice, the State Department informed its close allies that the U.S. would increase its military training personnel in Viet-nam and would justify it by reference to DRV violations of the Geneva Agreement. The Department instructed the relevant Embassies to emphasize that the DRV had violated Article 24 of the Agreement, which provided that armed forces of each party "shall commit no act and undertake no operation against the other party." The Department expressed hope that the GVN would fall in line with its rationale.

On May 15 Asst. Secretary McConaughy called in representatives British, French and Canadian Embassies to inform them that due DRV violations we have been required expand MAAG by about a hundred, that we did not seek justify this on basis MAAG ceiling, but rather as response DRV infractions Geneva Accords. McCounaughy emphasized we not overthrowing Geneva Accords, but did not wish our hands tied by following them in all respects while DRV violating them. He emphasized this personnel was for training. (Department intends soon inform Indians of above only.) FYI There will be considerable further increases in MAAG/Viet-Nam beyond 100 referred to above END FYI.

On May 19 Ledward, British Embassy, asked Departmental Officer how we planned handle MAAG increase and whether Indians would be informed since problems likely arise. Ledward said Fon Off on being informed above conversation with McConaughy had replied it well understood reasons MAAG increase and had no reservations, but was anxious be informed our next move. Departmental officer replied decision not yet final, but it appeared unlikely we would seek justify any further increases as being within MAAG ceiling (although it could be argued as basis MAAG increase that there were about 1500 trainers in VN at time Geneva Accords). Our tentative view was that due vital threat to GVN posed by DRV directed guerrillas in Viet-Nam, GVN entitled defend itself without being limited by restrictions on bringing in men and materiel set forth Article 16 and 17 Geneva Accords for VN.

Dept officer continued main reason GVN fighting for its existence today was that these restrictions had consistently been ignored by DRV since Geneva Accords went into effect. However, whatever decision was reached with GVN on Geneva Accords, we would not rpt not seek contravene main purpose Geneva Accords which was to prevent one side from violating the cease-fire and attacking the other. GVN was being clearly attacked by DRV through guerrilla methods; GVN certainly did not intend to cross demarcation line and attack DRV. Its aim was to defend itself and preserve its independence. In this we intended support GVN.

Action addressees should also point out that US-GVN decision not be limited by Articles 16 and 17 would be in accord with recognized principle international law that material breach of a treaty obligation by one party relieves the other of full compliance with its obligations until first party resumes observance (II Yearbook International Law Commission 1959, Articles 18 and 20 on law treaties, pp. 45, 46, 66-71.) The U.S. specifically intends that this action will be limited to period during which communists continue violate their treaty obligations. The U.S. will return to complete compliance as soon as the communists discontinue their violations.

Addressees should also emphasize that U.S. and GVN consider DRV has continuously breached Article 24 Geneva Accords which states that armed forces each party "shall commit no act and undertake no operation against the other party." (Copies Geneva Agreement pouched to addressees January 13, 1960). There is continuing evidence that armed DRV personnel acting under DRV orders have for years travelled from DRV territory into Viet-Nam and carried out hostile acts. The Kontum attack of October, 1960 when several hundred armed persons attacked across the Vietnamese frontier in unit formation is one example.

Finally, should emphasize this decision does not reflect desire upset ICC mechanisms. As set forth Department's 3404 to New Delhi, we believe that mechanism of ICC should be perfected. The present situation in Viet-Nam results to some extent from the fact that the ICC as set up by the 1954 Agreements has not been able to act effectively. This is why we have urged that the ICC mechanism in Laos be made effective.

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(50) TELEGRAM FROM NOLTING TO RUSK, May 26, 1961

Source: Document declassified by Department of State, December 3, 1974.

Ambassador Nolting sent a strong negative response to Kennedy Administration proposal for negotiating a bilateral security alliance with the GVN. He pointed out that Diem had never been eager to formalize an alliance with SEATO because of the clear break with Geneva Agreement which it would have indicated. He further argued that direct violation of Article 19 of the Agreement could not be justified by the arguments which he had urged for renunciation of Articles 16 and 17.

Task Force Saigon considers new bilateral arrangement with GVN neither necessary nor desirable at present time.

1. Presumably purpose of new bilateral would be to reassure Diem of US support and restore his confidence in firmness US determination not permit Communist seizure of Vietnam. Believe this already accomplished to large extent by Vice President Johnson's visit and concrete actions flowing therefrom. Moreover, believe way we handle ourselves in connection with Laos likely be more important touchstone GVN confidence in our determination than discussion of bilateral arrangement, on theory actions speak louder than words.

2. GVN itself has not expressed interest in such new arrangement and on basis Diem's past attitude toward association with SEATO it is questionable that GVN would be particularly responsive to idea. In past whenever Diem has been asked whether he wishes join SEATO, his answer has been that Geneva Accord precludes GVN entry into military alliance. Diem's motivation probably is that as SEATO protocol state Vietnam receives whatever benefits SEATO provides without liabilities which would arise from membership in SEATO, e.g., Geneva Accord problems, Communist propaganda, et cetera.

3. While Diem probably now dubious full membership of SEATO would take effective action, he has always realistically viewed US as real source SEATO strength and thus of guarantee to Vietnam under SEATO protocol. Diem would therefore probably feel that US would be about as likely take action under SEATO, either unilaterally or jointly with those SEATO powers which are willing, as under bilateral arrangement. Under indirect US planning guidance all VN contingency war plans are based on expressed assumption that US and/or SEATO forces will intervene immediately (24-72 hours) after overt attack on VN. This assumption so well established that he would probably therefore view bilateral arrangement as adding little to existing tacit guarantee.

4. Type of US-GVN bilateral being discussed would represent direct violation Article 19, Geneva Accords. While Embassy has recommended US-GVN denunciation Article 16 and 17 (EMBTEL 1752), believe similar action re Article 19 cannot be justified on basis requirements GVN self defense, ICC failures, or DRV violation, and not of much real value in meeting present Communist threat. Moreover, inclined believe political repercussions flowing from such violations Article 19 might provoke ICC into withdrawing from Vietnam taking with it such deterrent as it offers against DRV direct aggression.

Despite above, we would not wish exclude possible resort to bilateral arrangement at some point in future when it may be more needed or useful than at present in bolstering GVN confidence in US.

(51) TELEGRAM FROM NOLTING TO RUSK, May 27, 1961 (Extract)

Source: Document declassified by the Department of State, November 21, 1974.

Washington's diplomatic strategy for handling increases in U.S. military personnel ran into unexpected trouble when Nolting learned that Diem preferred to handle it without breaking with Articles 16 and 17 of the Geneva Agreement. Diem suggested using civilian clothes to disguise some and hoping for ICC approval of the rest. Nolting expressed doubt that Diem's suggestion would work, either militarily or politically.

In full talk with Thuan May 26, he led off by saying President Diem would like for me to accompany him on tour of country in near future, which I accepted (dates not fixed).

Thuan then said (EMBTEL 1794) Diem has carefully considered question introduction of US combat brigade as trainers, and had concluded that this would not be desirable at present time. Diem thought that an addition of up to one thousand MAAG personnel, over and above present number, would be desirable and could be accomplished through ICC decision. These, he believed, would suffice for training additional Army units. For training civil guard and self-defense corps, Diem felt that US military personnel in civilian clothes should be used. These would be over and above the number of MAAG military personnel mentioned above. GVN envisaged direct training.

I told Thuan that we do not wish to proceed against his Government's judgment in these matters and that I would wish to have General McGarr's and Washington's views before making any final comments; but that certain preliminary comments occurred to me: (1) an obvious relation exists between the number of US trainers needed and the number of Vietnamese forces to be trained, their time-phasing, etc.; (2) another factor was how we should decide together to handle the whole ICC matter, especially Article 16 and 17 of Geneva Accords; (3) another factor was whether or not training of civil guard and self-defense corps by US military personnel in civilian clothes was a good idea militarily or politically. I had some doubts on this in light Laotian experiences; (4) still another factor was whether it is a good tactic to argue for an ICC-approved increase in MAAG personnel when it is apparent that the final requirement is likely to exceed number which ICC will approve. To me, a more forthright approach to problem presented by ICC had considerable merit. In summary, I wondered whether the way proposed by Thuan of meeting the problem was adequate from the military point of view and whether it was good from the political point of view.

Thuan seemed interested in idea that Article 16 and 17 of the Geneva Accords might be ignored, but worried that this might bring about the abrogation by the Commies of the entire Accords, and/or the withdrawal of the ICC. He said that the GVN felt that Geneva Accords and ICC had certain deterrent value worth preserving. Thuan suggested as alternative position that we should work together to sound out opinion of our allies re denunciation of Articles 16 and 17, while at same time proceeding to build up numerical strength of MAAG under existing regulations. This matter was left inconclusive. We need Washington reactions to our EMBTELS 1752 and 1788.

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(52) LETTER FROM DIEM TO KENNEDY, June 9, 1961

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations, Book II*, pp. 167-173.

The mood of the GVN, and of Diem himself, was far more pessimistic than anything suggested by internal U.S. documents. Writing to Kennedy, Diem portrayed a situation in which the Communists held the advantage and were constantly increasing their infiltration into the South. The GVN military's own estimate, he said, was that an additional 100,000 troops would be needed, in addition to the 20,000 increase already projected.

In reference to my letter dated 15 May 1961 and in reply to the invitation that was made to me in your name by Vice President Johnson, I have the honor to send you a study on our needs to meet the new situation.

As I expressed verbally to your eminent representative, it pertains to a situation which has become very much more perilous following the events in Laos, the more and more equivocal attitude of Cambodia and the intensification of the activities of aggression of international communism which wants to take the maximum advantage to accelerate the conquest of Southeast Asia. It is apparent that one of the major obstacles to the communist expansion on this area of the globe is Free Vietnam because with your firm support, we are resolved to oppose it with all our energies. Consequently, now and henceforth, we constitute the first target for the communists to overthrow at any cost. The enomous [sic] accumulation of Russian war material in North Vietnam is aimed, in the judgment of foreign observers, more at South Vietnam that at Laos. We clearly realize this dangerous situation but I want to reiterate to you here, in my personal name and in the name of the entire Vietnamese people, our indomitable will to win.

But if on the other hand it is, at best, only desirable rather than essential that a position of power be maintained on the mainland, then other courses are indicated. We would, then, properly view such improvement as may be obtained by the new approach in Vietnam primarily in terms of what it might contribute to strengthening our diplomatic hand in the Southeast Asian region. And we would use that hand as vigorously as possible and in every way possible not to deepen our costly involvement on the Asian mainland but to lighten it.

(39) TELEGRAM FROM SECRETARY RUSK TO DURBROW, February 3, 1961

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations, Book 11*, pp. 14-16.

A Counterinsurgency Plan, recommending economic, political and military steps to defeat the Vietnamese revolutionaries, was waiting for John F. Kennedy when he was inaugurated. His first Presidential decision was to approve the plan, which would increase Diem's army by 20,000 men and increase the Civil Guard by 32,000 men. The plan also called for efforts by Diem to increase its popular support, and therefore required extensive negotiations to get Diem's approval for the whole package.

Counterinsurgency Plan, including 20,000 men increase VN armed forces (NVNAF) and provision training and equipment 32,000 Civil Guard, approved on basis following FY 61 funding: $28.4 million MAP for expanded NVNAF and $12.7 million MAP for Civil Guard. $660,000 as proposed for psychological operations and communications equipment also approved.

Highly commend Ambassador, Country Team and staffs. Recognize Plan allows considerable latitude for changes and refinements as implementation worked out with GVN and as situation requires. However, U.S. would as Plan provides expect GVN absorb local currency costs these increases aid does not contemplate further US dollar grants to generate additional local currency for this purpose.

Preparation abridged version plan suitable for use Ambassador and in presenting plan to Diem. In presenting plan to Diem recommend you emphasize implemented promptly and vigorously, we believe it will give GVN means turn tide against VC and at same time improve GVN capacity resist overt aggression. Immediate purpose Plan is to enable GVN defeat insurgency, but Plan also envisages that GVN must move on political front towards liberalization to retain necessary popular cooperation; that various economic steps be taken; and that there be adequate cooperation with RKG on frontier control. It is considered US view that success requires implementation entire plan.

Should make clear our present commitment to support Counterinsurgency Plan is only for FY 61 part of program. Future funding will require Congressional approval. Views Congress likely be influenced by developments in political as well as security situation. FY 61 component represents large increase in US support Viet-Nam. If GVN willing to accept the obligations involved in its implementation, the US is ready give full and immediate support in carrying it out.

Suggest proposing to Diem that members US Missions ready confer with GVN opposite numbers work out agreed version Plan within, say, two week time limit. Urge changes be kept minimal to avoid necessity referred CINCPAC and Washington.

In implementing Plan recommend that Country Team:

a) Conduct annual or more frequent review question balance as between forces committed primarily against VC and those intended primarily resist external aggression.
b) Emphasize importance GVN-RKG border control.
c) Urge GVN improve treatment VC prisoners, as done by Magsaysay, to encourage desertions.
d) Urge GVN increase efforts to infiltrate VC in SVN.

In view Congressional interest monetary reform advise whether GVN should be pressed for early establishment unitary rate or whether additional costs imposed on GVN by Plan will have same effect.

If Ambassador considers GVN does not provide necessary cooperation, he should inform Washington with recommendations which may include suspension US contribution.

(40) TELEGRAM FROM DURBROW TO RUSK, February 7, 1961

Source: Document declassified by State Department, December 3, 1974.

The Geneva Agreement prohibited, in Article 16, the introduction of "additional military personnel" into Viet-nam, except on the basis of one-to-one replacement of units or groups of military personnel. At the time of the Geneva Agreement there were 888 foreign military advisers on the side of the French Union Forces, but after the French left, the U.S. maintained a military training and advisory group of 385. In May 1960, the U.S increased that number to 685, arguing to the International Control Commission that it had the right to have up to 888 military advisers, despite the fact that this was clearly not "rotation" as required by the agreement. In February 1961, as the U.S. began contemplating another major increase in advisory personnel, the Embassy suggested arguments which might be made for various levels of increases, all of which assumed that it was not necessary to observe the "rotation" requirement.

For contingency planning purposes the following study has been prepared in order to analyze the Geneva Accords aspects of stationing additional U.S. military personnel in Viet-Nam in connection with possible transit by land or air of material through Viet-Nam to Laos. As with an earlier paper, "Geneva Accords Aspects of Introduction of U.S. Combat Forces into Viet-Nam or Laos" (Saigon's G0191 of October 31, 1960), it is assumed that the introduction of additional U.S. military personnel would result in charges in the ICC from the DRV and the Polish ICC Delegation and that the U.S. would wish to be able, through the Canadians and the GVN to refute such charges and to argue that the introduction of additional military personnel does not violate the Geneva Accords.

The Embassy believes that the introduction of such additional military personnel as may be necessary can be justified on the basis of the following three possible alternatives depending on the number of additional personnel required:

1. If we introduce up to 203 additional military personnel, it is proposed that such additional military personnel be introduced as when MAAG personnel was increased in 1960. The argumentation which would be used to justify such augmentation is basically that developed in connection with the increase in MAAG (see enclosure B of Dept's Ca-6321 of February 5, 1960) on the basis that at the time of the cease fire there were 888 foreign military advisors in Viet-Nam. We would take the position that these additional personnel should be considered part of MAAG Viet-Nam because their main functions of processing equipment under a U.S. military assistance program is a basic function of MAAG under the Pentalateral Agreement of 1951. While we told the Indians in early 1960 in connection with the then proposed MAAG increase to 685 that "the United States has no intention of increasing MAAG to 888 unless conditions in Southeast Asia should deteriorate seriously" (section entitled "For New Delhi" of CA-6321), this should not prove too difficult given the present internal security in Laos. Use of the 888 figure would thus permit the introduction of 203 military personnel in addition to the present MAAG complement of 685.

2. If still more U.S. military personnel were required, we would then propose to argue that the 888 limitation on foreign advisory personnel in Viet-Nam should be replaced by the figure of 1,847 on the ground that subsequent information has disclosed that the latter is a more accurate figure regarding foreign military advisory personnel in Viet-Nam at about time of conclusion of Geneva Accords. The Department will recall (our Despatch 420, May 27, 1960) that, subsequent to the increase in MAAG strength to 685, the French Military Attache in Saigon informed the Embassy that there were 1,847 French and U.S. training and advisory personnel in Viet Nam as of April 1, 1955. This figure would thus permit us to argue that we could increase MAAG strength by 1,162 in order to cover additional personnel required in connection with the transit of materiel through Viet-Nam to Laos.

3. If a requirement should develop for more than 1,162 additional personnel justifiable under 2 above, justification would then have to be that we were replacing French combat personnel withdrawn from Viet-Nam. The argumentation for this was provided in Saigon's G-191.

(41) NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 28 BY SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT MCGEORGE BUNDY, March 9, 1961

Source: *U.S.-Vietnam Relations*, Book 11, p. 18.

As the U.S. began to work out a counterinsurgency program for South Viet-nam with Diem, Kennedy also ordered that plans be made for covert guerrilla operations against North Viet-nam, still referred to as "Viet Minh territory."

In view of the President's instruction that we make every possible effort to launch guerrilla operations in Viet-Minh territory at the earliest possible time, would you report to the President as soon as feasible your views on what actions might be undertaken in the near future and what steps might be taken to expand operations in the longer future.

(42) MESSAGES FROM THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, April 24, 1961

Source: United Kingdom, International Conference on the Settlement of the Laotian Question. Laos No. 1 (1962), Geneva, May 12, 1961-July 23, 1952. CAD. 1828. London: H.M.'s Stationery Office, October 1962, pp. 6-7.

After three weeks of negotiations between the Soviet Union and Britain, the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference issued three statements on April 4, the first inviting participants to an international conference on Laos to begin on May 12, the second calling for immediate negotiations on a ceasefire agreement, and the third asking the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos to reconvene in order to supervise a ceasefire there. The first two of these three statements are published here.

The Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China, represented by the Governments of the Soviet Union and Great Britain, are following with great concern the situation which has developed in Laos.

They proceed from the fact that if this situation is not changed the position in Laos may become a serious threat to peace and security in South-East Asia. They note at the same time that real conditions exist for normalising the situation in Laos in accordance with the national interests of the Laotian people, on the basis of the Geneva Agreements of 1954. The Co-Chairmen have in view the understanding already reached that an international conference to settle the Laotian problem is to be called in Geneva on May 12 this year.

The Co-Chairmen call on all military authorities, parties and organizations in Laos to cease fire before the convening of the international conference on Laos, and they call on appropriate representatives to enter into negotiations for concluding an agreement on questions connected with the cease-fire.

(48) TELEGRAM FROM AMBASSADOR FREDERICK E. NOLTING, JR., IN SAIGON TO RUSK, May 16, 1961

Source: Document declassified by Department of State, December 3, 1974.

Anticipating that the U.S. would be required by the decision already made by the Kennedy Administration to increase military equipment and training personnel beyond what the International Control Commission would agree was consistent with the Geneva Agreement, Ambassador Nolting recommended that the U.S. not attempt to justify each increase as consistent with the Geneva Agreement. He urged instead that the U.S. renounce Articles 16 and 17 of the Agreement, which restricted the dispatch of troops and arms to Viet-nam to "rotation" and replacement, citing the failure of international controls to prevent Communist violations of the Agreement.

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The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam considers that the political problem in Viet-nam should be settled in conformity with the provisions of the Geneva Agreements, that is to say, a consultative conference should be opened between the competent representative authorities of the two zones to discuss the holding of free general elections in view of achieving the reunification of Viet-nam, thereby consolidating peace in Viet-nam Indo-China and contribute to world peace.

2. - The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam holds that the French Government and the Government in South Viet-nam should assure their obligation in the execution of the Geneva Agreements, in the cessation of hostilities as well as in the political settlement.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam requests the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference to take all the necessary measures to ensure the respect for the Geneva Agreements, the settlement of the political problem in Viet-nam, the immediate convening of the consultative conference between the competent representative authorities of the Northern and Southern zones to discuss the reunification of Viet-nam through free general elections throughout the country.

That is not only the interests and aspirations of the entire Vietnamese people, but also the desire of the peace-loving peoples in the whole world.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam hopes that in accordance with the spirit of the recent Geneva Four Power Conference, the terms concluded and endorsed at the Geneva Conference last year will be fully respected and executed.

Please accept here, Messrs. Co-Chairmen, my best regards.

(10) NOTE FROM GIAP TO CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL COMMISSION, SHRI PARHASARATHI, April 10, 1956 (Extract)

Source: *Documents Related to the Implementation of the Geneva Agreements*, pp. 133-134.

As the French withdrawal from South Vietnam neared, Giap asked the International Control Commission to put pressure on the French government as well as the South Vietnamese Government to take responsibility for implementation of the Agreements, and to request action from the Conference Co-Chairmen.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam holds that the reconvening of the 1954 Geneva Conference to discuss the obligations and measures necessary to ensure the continuation of the implementation of the Geneva Agreements has now become more urgent and indispensable than ever.

In face of the afore-said critical situation provoked by the refusal of the South Viet-nam Administration to recognize the Geneva Agreements and by the French Government's attitude of evading its obligations following the withdrawal of French troops, the High Command of the Vietnamese People's Army considers that the International Commission should take a timely stand, and has the honour to request the Commission:

1. - To assert that, in spite of the withdrawal of French troops from South Viet-nam, the question of ensuring the continuation of full implementation of the Geneva Agreements as a whole is the joint responsibility of the French Government and the South Viet-nam Administration - the responsibility of the French Government as a signatory to the Geneva Agreements and at the same time that of the South Viet-nam Administration as successor to the French Government, in continuing the implementation of these Agreements;

2. - To assert that the above-mentioned situation constitutes a major danger for the Geneva Agreements and at the same time greatly hampers the activities of the International Commission, thereby gravely jeopardizing peace in Viet-nam and South East Asia;

3. - To report to the two Co-Chairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference the afore-said situation and the attitude of the International Commission in face of such a situation, and to request the Co-Chairmen to take necessary measures ensuring full and correct execution of the Geneva Agreements.

Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(11) MESSAGE FROM THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, May 8, 1956.

Source: Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Vietnam and the Geneva Agreements, Documents Concerning the Discussions Between Representatives of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Held in London in April and May 1956* (Vietnam No. 2 (1956). London, Cmd. 9763, pp. 10-11.

The most important negotiations on the implementation of the Geneva election provision were held between Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and British Minister of State Lord Reading in late April and early May. The message which was hammered out by the two sides represented a compromise falling far short of what the D.R.V. hoped to get: a call for another Geneva Conference on Indochina. In return for a specific request from both Hanoi and Saigon for views on when consultations could be held, the Soviets gave in on the more important objective.

Acting with the authority of the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Great Britain, Lord Reading, and the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. A. A. Gromyko, have met in London, as representatives of the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China, and have made a thorough examination of the problems relating to the fulfilment of the Geneva Agreements in Vietnam. They have also exchanged views on the proposal to convene a further conference of Members of the original Geneva Conference and of the Supervisory Powers to discuss these problems.

2. In the course of these talks they expressed their concern about the present situation in relation to the fulfilment of the Geneva Agreements in Vietnam, where the implementation of the political provisions of the Geneva Agreements has not yet begun. In particular, consultations have not taken place about the preparation and holding of free, nation-wide elections in Vietnam under the supervision of an International Commission with a view to the re-establishment of the national unity of Vietnam. There is thus at present a threat to the fulfilment of this important provision of the Geneva Agreements, although both sides in Vietnam have accepted the principle of national reunification by means of free general elections.

3. Pending the holding of free general elections for the reunification of Vietnam, the two Co-Chairmen attach great importance to the maintenance of the cease-fire under the continued supervision of the International Commission for Vietnam. They recognise that the dissolution of the French Union High Command has increased the difficulties of the International Supervisory Commission in Vietnam in carrying out the functions specified in the Geneva Agreements, which are the basis for the Commission's activities, and that these difficulties must be overcome. The Co-Chairmen are confident that the authorities in both parts of Vietnam will show effective co-operation and that these difficulties will in practice be removed.

4. Prompted by their desire to strengthen peace in Indo-China on the basis of the principles and provisions of the Geneva Agreements, the Co-Chairmen strongly urge the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and those of the Republic of Vietnam to make every effort to implement the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, to prevent any future violation of the military provisions and principles embodied in the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference. To this end the authorities of both parts of Vietnam are invited to transmit to the Co-Chairmen as soon as possible, either jointly or separately their views about the time required for the opening of consultations on the organisation of nation-wide elections in Vietnam and the time required for the holding of elections as a means of achieving the unification of Vietnam.

5. Having noted with appreciation the valuable work performed by the International Supervisory Commission for Vietnam, the Co-Chairmen strongly urge the authorities in both parts of Vietnam to give the Commission all possible assistance in future in the exercise of their functions as defined by the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam.

6. The Co-Chairmen will continue to consult together about the situation in Vietnam and, if necessary in the light of that situation, they will also discuss the measures which should be taken to ensure the fulfilment of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam, including the proposal to convene a new conference of the Members of the original Geneva Conference and of the States represented in the International Commissions in Indo-China.

Mike Mansfield Questions American Policy, 1962

Even assuming that aid over a prolonged period would be available, the question still remains as to the capacity of the present Saigon government to carry out the task of social engineering. Ngo Dinh Diem remains a dedicated, sincere, hardworking, incorruptible and patriotic leader. But he is older and the problems which confront him are more complex than those which he faced when he pitted his genuine nationalism against, first, the French and Bao Dai and then against the sects with such effectiveness. The energizing role which he played in the past appears to be passing to other members of his family, particularly Ngo Dinh Nhu. The latter is a person of great energy and intellect who is fascinated by the operations of political power and has consummate eagerness and ability in organizing and manipulating it. But it is Ngo Dinh Diem, not Ngo Dinh Nhu, who has such popular mandate to exercise power as there is in south Vietnam. In a situation of this kind there is a great danger of the corruption of unbridled power. This has implications far beyond the persistent reports and rumors of fiscal and similar irregularities which are, in any event, undocumented. More important is its effect on the organization of the machinery for carrying out the new concepts. The difficulties in Vietnam are not likely to be overcome by a handful of paid retainers and sycophants. The success of the new approach in Vietnam presupposes a great contribution of initiative and self-sacrifice from a substantial body of Vietnamese with capacities for leadership at all levels. Whether that contribution can be obtained remains to be seen. For in the last analysis it depends upon a diffusion of political power, essentially in a democratic pattern. The trends in the political life of Vietnam have not been until now in that direction despite lip service to the theory of developing democratic and popular institutions "from the bottom up" through the strategic hamlet program.

To summarize, our policies and activities are designed to meet an existing set of internal problems in south Vietnam. North Vietnam infiltrates some supplies and cadres into the south; together with the Vietnamese we are trying to shut off this flow. The Vietcong has had the offensive in guerrilla warfare in the countryside; we are attempting to aid the Vietnamese military in putting them on the defensive with the hope of eventually reducing them at least to ineffectiveness. Finally, the Vietnamese peasants have sustained the Vietcong guerrillas out of fear, indifference or blandishment and we are helping the Vietnamese in an effort to win the peasants away by offering them the security and other benefits which may be provided in the strategic hamlets.

That, in brief, is the present situation. As noted, there is optimism that success will be achieved quickly. My own view is that the problems can be made to yield to present remedies, *provided* the problems and their magnitude do not change significantly and *provided* that the remedies are pursued by both Vietnamese and Americans (and particularly the former) with great vigor and self-dedication.

Certainly, if these remedies do not work, it is difficult to conceive of alternatives, with the possible exception of a truly massive commitment of American military personnel and other resources—in short going to war fully ourselves against the guerrillas—and the establishment of some form of neocolonial rule in south Vietnam. That is an alternative which I most emphatically do not recommend. On the contrary, it seems to me most essential that we make crystal clear to the Vietnamese government and to our own people that while we will go to great lengths to help, the primary responsibility rests with the Vietnamese. Our role is and must remain secondary in present circumstances. It is their country, their future which is most at stake, not ours.

To ignore that reality will not only be immensely costly in terms of American lives and resources but it may also draw us inexorably into some variation of the unenviable position in Vietnam which was formerly occupied by the French. We are not, of course, at that point at this time. But the great increase in American military commitment this year has tended to point us in that general direction and we may well begin to slide rapidly toward it if any of the present remedies begin to falter in practice.

As indicated, our planning appears to be predicated on the assumption that existing internal problems in South Vietnam will remain about the same and can be overcome by greater effort and better techniques. But what if the problems do not remain the same? To all outward appearances, little if any thought has been given in Saigon at least, to the possibilities of a change in the nature of the problems themselves. Nevertheless, they are very real possibilities and the initiative for instituting change rests in enemy hands largely because of the weakness of the Saigon government. The range of possible change includes a step-up in the infiltration of cadres and supplies by land or sea. It includes the use of part or all of the regular armed forces of North Vietnam, reported to be about 300,000 strong, under Vo Nguyen Giap. It includes, in the last analysis, the possibility of a major increase in any of many possible forms of Chinese Communist support for the Vietcong.

None of these possibilities may materialize. It would be folly, however, not to recognize their existence and to have as much clarification in advance of what our response to them will be if they do.

This sort of anticipatory thinking cannot be undertaken with respect to the situation in Vietnam alone. The problem there can be grasped, it seems to me, only as we have clearly in mind our interests with respect to all of Southeast Asia. If it is essential in our own interests to maintain a quasi-permanent position of power on the Asian mainland as against the Chinese then we must be prepared to continue to pay the present cost in Vietnam indefinitely and to meet any escalation on the other side with at least a commensurate escalation of commitment of our own. This can go very far, indeed, in terms of lives and resources. Yet if it is essential to our interests then we would have no choice.

Ho Chi Minh's Appeal After the Geneva Agreements, 1954

The Geneva Conference has come to an end. It is a great victory for our diplomacy.

On behalf of the Government, I cordially make the following appeal:

1. For the sake of peace, unity, independence, and democracy of the Fatherland, our people, armymen, cadres, and Government have, during these eight years or so, joined in a monolithic bloc, endured hardship, and resolutely overcome all difficulties to carry out the Resistance; we have won many brilliant victories. On this occasion, on behalf of the Government, I cordially congratulate you, from North to South. I respectfully bow to the memory of the armymen and people who have sacrificed their lives for the Fatherland, and send my homages of comfort to the wounded and sick armymen.

This great victory is also due to the support given us in our just struggle by the peoples of our brother countries, by the French people, and by the peace-loving people of the world.

Thanks to these victories and the efforts made by the delegation of the Soviet Union at the Berlin Conference, negotiations were opened between our country and France at the Geneva Conference. At this conference, the struggle of our delegation and the assistance given by the delegations of the Soviet Union and China have ended in a great victory for us: The French Government has recognized the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of our country; it has agreed to withdraw French troops from our country, etc.

From now on, we must make every effort to consolidate peace and achieve reunification, independence, and democracy throughout our country.

2. In order to re-establish peace, the first step to take is that the armed forces of both parties should cease fire.

The regroupment in two regions is a temporary measure; it is a transitional step for the implementation of the armistice and restoration of peace, and paves the way for national reunification through general elections. Regroupment in regions is in no way a partition of our country, neither is it an administrative division.

During the armistice, our army is regrouped in the North; the French troops are regrouped in the South, that is to say, there is a change of regions. A number of regions which were formerly occupied by the French now become our free zones. Vice versa, a number of regions formerly liberated by us will now be temporarily occupied by the French troops before they leave for France.

This is a necessity; North, Central, and South Viet-Nam are territories of ours. Our country will certainly be unified, our entire people will surely be liberated.

Our compatriots in the South were the first to wage the war of Resistance. They possess a high political consciousness. I am confident that they will place national interests above local interests, permanent interests above temporary interests, and join their efforts with the entire people in strengthening peace, achieving unity, independence, and democracy all over the country. The Party, Government, and I always follow the efforts of our people and we are sure that our compatriots will be victorious.

3. The struggle to consolidate peace and achieve reunification, independence, and democracy is also a long and hard struggle. In order to carry the day, our people, armymen, and cadres from North to South must unite closely. They must be at one in thought and deed.

We are resolved to abide by the agreements entered into with the French Government. At the same time, we demand that the French Government correctly implement the agreements they have signed with us.

We must do our utmost to strengthen peace and be vigilant to check the maneuvers of peace wreckers.

We must endeavor to struggle for the holding of free general elections throughout the country to reunify our territory.

We must exert all our efforts to restore, build, strengthen, and develop our forces in every field so as to attain complete independence.

We must do our utmost to carry out social reforms in order to improve our people's livelihood and realize genuine democracy.

We further tighten our fraternal relations with Cambodia and Laos.

We strengthen the great friendship between us and the Soviet Union, China, and other brother countries. To maintain peace, we enhance our solidarity with the French people, the Asian people, and people all over the world.

4. I call on all our compatriots, armymen, and cadres to follow strictly the lines and policies laid down by the Party and Government, to struggle for the consolidation of peace and the achievement of national reunification, independence, and democracy throughout the country.

I eagerly appeal to all genuine patriots, irrespective of their social class, creed, political stand, and former affiliation, to cooperate sincerely with us and fight for the sake of our country and our people so as to bring about peace and achieve reunification, independence, and democracy for our beloved Viet-Nam.

If our people are as one, if thousands of men are like one, victory will certainly be ours.

Long live a peaceful, unified, independent, and democratic Viet-Nam.

(3) NOTE FROM MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS PHAM VAN DONG TO THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE 1954 GENEVA CONFERENCE ON INDO-CHINA, August 17, 1955

Source: *Documents Related to the Implementaion of the Geneva Agreements. . . ,* pp. 45-50.

After the Diem government refused to consult on the problem of all-Vietnam general elections, D.R.V. Foreign Minister Pham Van Dong turned to the Geneva Co-Chairmen, Britain and France, seeking their intervention to take "all necessary measures" to ensure compliance with the Geneva Agreement's political provisions. No answer to this note has been published, and according to a former State Department official, it was only one of more than a dozen communications from Hanoi to the Co-Chairmen on the subject of pre-election consultations, between July 1954 and the end of 1955, none of which was answered due to "lack of interest in the question in Moscow." See Paul M. Kattenburg, "Vietnam and U.S. Diplomacy," Orbis, *XV (Fall 1971), p. 822.*

Messrs. Co-Chairmen,

I have the honour to address the present note to you, Messrs. Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, to inform you of the grave situation now menacing the political settlement in Viet-nam in conformity with the Geneva Agreements - that is the holding of the consultative conference between the competent representative authorities in North and South Viet-nam to discuss the organization of free general elections which will bring about the reunificantion of Viet-nam - , and to expound to you our position in face of this grave situation.

After 8 to 9 years of atrocious war, the Geneva Conference had re-established peace in Indo-China on the basis of respect for the principles of the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Viet-nam, Cambodia and Laos.

Paragraph 2 of the Final Declaration of the Conference clearly stipulates that:

> *"The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present Declaration and in the Agreements on the cessation of hositilities will permit Cambodia, Laos and Viet-nam henceforth to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations".*

As far as Viet-nam is concerned, Paragraph 6 of the Final Declaration also clearly provides that:

> *"The essential purpose of the Agreement relating to Viet-nam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present Declaration and in the Agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Viet-nam".*

And paragraph 7:

> *"The Conference declares that so far as Viet-nam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity and territorial integrity, shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot. . . . General elections shall be held in July 1956 under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission referred to in the Agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from 20 July, 1955 onwards".*

With regard to the responsibilities of the Governments having the obligation of executing the Geneva Agreements, Article 14(a) of the Agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-nam says:

> *"Pending the general elections which will bring about the unification of Viet-nam, the conduct of civil administration in each regrouping zone shall be in the hands of the party whose forces are to be regrouped there in virtue of the present Agreement".*

And Article 27:

> *"The signatories of the present Agreement and their successors in their functions shall be responsible for ensuring the observance and enforcement of the terms and provisions thereof".*

Thus, the Geneva Agreements (the Agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Viet-nam, and the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference) have precisely fixed the measures to be taken to put an end to the hostilities and to settle the political problem in view of re-establishing and consolidating peace in Indo-China in a stable and lasting manner.

Thanks to the efforts of the interested parties and to the collaboration of the International Commission for Supervision and Control, the first 300 days of the execution of the Armistice Agreement have brought good results, the regroupment and transfer of military forces have been completed.

That is a notable success in the implementation of the Geneva Agreements, thereby creating *"the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Viet-nam"*.

In view of the political settlement in Viet-nam, the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam declared on June 6, 1955, its *"readiness to hold a consultative conference with the competent representative authorities in South Viet-nam to discuss the question of preparing for the general elections in order to achieve the reunification of Viet-nam"*.

Following the June 6, 1955 declaration of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam, the Sai-gon Radio broadcast on July 16 a statement on the position of the Government in South Viet-nam in connnection with the question of general elections in view of unifying the national territory; according to this statement, the authorities in South Viet-nam have repudiated the Geneva Agreements and did not touch upon the question of conducting a consultative conference to discuss the free general elections to achieve Viet-nam's reunification as provided for by the Geneva Agreements.

On July 19, 1955, the President and Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam addressed to the Government of South Viet-nam a note in which he clearly said:

> *"The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam proposes that you appoint your representatives and that they and ours hold the consultative conference from July 20, 1955 onwards, as provided for by the Geneva Agreements, at a place agreeable to both sides, on the Vietnamese territory, in order to discuss the problem of reunification of our country by means of free general elections all over Viet-nam".*

The position and attitude of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam fully conform to the interests and intimate aspirations of the entire Vietnamese people, and have their warm response and enthusiastic support.

On August 9, 1955, the authorities in South Viet-nam, without officially replying to the July 19 note of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam, made public, again through the Sai-gon Radio, another statement the contents of which did not in the least differ from that of the July 16 declaration, inasmuch as it continued to repudiate the Geneva Agreements and refused all consultations to discuss the holding of free general elections with a view to achieving the reunification of Viet-nam by peaceful means.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam deems that the implementation of the Geneva Agreements and the political settlement in Viet-nam are being seriously menaced owing to the attitude of the authorities in South Viet-nam.

The consultative conference between the competent representative authorities of the Northern and Southern zones in accordance with the Geneva Agreements, would have started by July 20, 1955, but so far it has not yet been convened; that is a grave situation for the consolidation of peace and the achievement of Viet-nam's unity and also a factor which aggravates tension in Indo-China and South East Asia.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam therefore addresses this note to the Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference to expound its position and ask for the intervention of the Co-Chairmen:

1. - The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam has executed and continues to execute strictly and scrupulously the Geneva Agreements. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-nam is resolved to exhort the interested parties to execute the Geneva Agreements strictly and scrupulously.

Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference on Indochina, 1954

1. The Conference takes note of the agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and organizing international control and the supervision of the execution of the provisions of these agreements.

2. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the end of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam; the Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreements of the cessation of hostilities will permit Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam henceforth to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations.

3. The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

4. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam prohibiting the introduction into Vietnam of foreign troops and military personnel as well as of all kinds of arms and munitions. The Conference also takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia and Laos of their resolution not to request foreign aid, whether in war material, in personnel, or in instructors except for the purpose of the effective defense of their territory and, in the case of Laos, to the extent defined by the agreements of the cessation of hostilities in Laos.

5. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam to the effect that no military base under the control of a foreign State may be established in the regrouping zones of the two parties, the latter having the obligation to see that the zones allotted to them shall not constitute part of any military alliance and shall not be utilized for the resumption of hostilities or in the service of an aggressive policy. The Conference also takes note of the declarations of the Governments of Cambodia and Laos to the effect that they will not join in any agreement with other States if this agreement includes the obligation to participate in a military alliance not in conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations or, in the case of Laos, with the principles of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Laos or, so long as their security is not threatened, the obligation to establish bases on Cambodian or Laotian territory for the military forces of foreign powers.

6. The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Vietnam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary. The Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the

provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities creates the necessary basis for the achievement in the near future of a political settlement in Vietnam.

7. The Conference declares that, so far as Vietnam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity, and territorial integrity, shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free general elections by secret ballot. In order to ensure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956 under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission, referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from July 20, 1955, onward.

8. The provisions of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities intended to ensure the protection of individuals and of property must be most strictly applied and must, in particular, allow everyone in Vietnam to decide freely in which zone he wishes to live.

9. The competent representative authorities of the North and South zones of Vietnam, as well as the authorities of Laos and Cambodia, must not permit any individual or collective reprisals against persons who had collaborated in any way with one of the parties during the war, or against members of such persons' families.

10. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the Government of the French Republic to the effect that it is ready to withdraw its troops from the territory of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, at the request of the Governments concerned and within periods which shall be fixed by agreement between the parties except in the cases where, by agreement between the two parties, a certain number of French troops shall remain at specified points and for a specified time.

11. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government to the effect that for the settlement of all the problems connected with the re-establishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

12. In their relations with Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity, and the territorial integrity of the above-mentioned States, and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs.

13. The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to ensure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam are respected.

South Vietnamese Statement on Reunification, 1955

In the last July 1955 broadcast, the Vietnamese national Government has made it clear its position towards the problem of territorial unity.

The Government does not consider itself bound in any respect by the Geneva Agreements which it did not sign.

Once more, the Government reasserts that in any circumstance, it places national interests above all, being resolved to achieve at all cost the obvious aim it is pursuing and eventually to achieve national unity, peace and freedom.

The Viet-Minh leaders have had a note dated July 19 transmitted to the Government, in which they asked for the convening of a consultative conference on general elections. This is just a propaganda move aimed at making the people believe that they are the champions of our territorial unity. Everyone still remembers that last year at Geneva, the Vietnamese Communists boisterously advocated the partition of our territory and asked for an economically self-sufficient area whereas the delegation of the State of Viet-nam proposed an armistice without any partition, not even provisional, with a view to safeguarding the sacred rights of the Vietnamese national and territorial unity, national independence and individual freedom. As the Vietnamese delegation states, the Vietnamese Government then stood for the fulfillment of national aspirations by the means which have been given back to Viet-nam by the French solemn recognition of the independence and sovereignty of Viet-nam, as a legal, independent state.

The policy of the Government remains unchanged. Confronted with the partition of the country, which is contrary to the will of the entire people, the Government will see to it that everybody throughout the country may live free from fear, and completely free from all totalitarian oppression. As a champion of justice, of genuine democracy, the Government always holds that the principle of free general election is a peaceful and democratic means only if, first of all, the freedom to live and freedom of vote is sufficiently guaranteed.

In this connection, nothing constructive can be contemplated in the present situation in the North where, under the rule of the Vietnamese Communists, the citizens do not enjoy democratic freedoms and fundamental human rights.

Eisenhower Explains the Domino Theory, 1954

Q. Robert Richards, Copley Press: Mr. President, would you mind commenting on the strategic importance of Indochina to the free world? I think there has been, across the country, some lack of understanding on just what it means to us.

The President: You have, of course, both the specific and the general when you talk about such things.

First of all, you have the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs.

Then you have the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world.

Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences.

Now, with respect to the first one, two of the items from this particular area that the world uses are tin and tungsten. They are very important. There are others, of course, the rubber plantations and so on.

Then with respect to more people passing under this domination, Asia, after all, has already lost some 450 million of its peoples to the Communist dictatorship, and we simply can't afford greater losses.

But when we come to the possible sequence of events, the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following, now you begin to talk about areas that not only multiply the disadvantages that you would suffer through loss of materials, sources of materials, but now you are talking about millions and millions and millions of people.

Finally, the geographical position achieved thereby does many things. It turns the so-called island defensive chain of Japan, Formosa, of the Philippines and to the southward; it moves in to threaten Australia and New Zealand.

It takes away, in its economic aspects, that region that Japan must have as a trading area or Japan, in turn, will have only one place in the world to go—that is, toward the Communist areas in order to live.

So, the possible consequences of the loss are just incalculable to the free world.

"It is thoroughly understood that French sovereignty will be reestablished as soon as possible throughout all the territory, metropolitan and colonial, over which flew the French flag in 1939." (Mr. Murphy, the Personal Representative of the President, in an unpublished letter of November 2, 1942 to General Giraud.)

"It has been agreed by all French elements concerned and the United States military authorities that French forces will aid and support the forces of the United States and their allies to expel from the soil of Africa the common enemy, to liberate France and restore integrally the French Empire." (Preamble of unpublished Clark-Darlan Agreement of November 22, 1942.)

2. Restoration Subject to Conditions Accepted by Other Colonial Powers in the Pacific and Far East.

Upon the liberation of Indochina and the termination of military operations in that area under the condition that the French Government accepts the following minimum commitments, which it is assumed will also be accepted by the other colonial powers in the Pacific and the Far East: (1) subscription to a colonial charter; (2) membership on behalf of Indochina in a regional commission; and (3) the submission of annual reports on the progress made in Indochina during the year in education, government, and social and economic conditions.

3. Restoration Subject to Additional Conditions.

The considerations which favor placing additional conditions on France are: (1) French administration of Indochina has in general been less satisfactory and less considerate of the interests of the native peoples than have been the administrations of the other leading colonial powers in the Pacific and the Far East, and (2) the French authorities cooperated with the Japanese and permitted them to enter and to effect military control of the colony.

To remedy the more outstanding weaknesses of the French administration of Indochina the United Nations in the Far Eastern area might insist that France be permitted to return to Indochina only after giving commitments to carry out the following reforms:

1. Tariff autonomy for Indochina.
2. The establishment and development of local and central representative institutions; the extension of the franchise as rapidly as possible.
3. Access on equal terms to all occupations and professions by Indo-Chinese; adequate educational and training facilities for all elements of the population.
4. Abolition of compulsory labor and effective supervision of labor contracts.
5. The development of local industries and a more balanced economy.

The chief considerations against placing additional conditions on France are that such conditions would constitute a discrimination against France and, in view of the national sensitiveness of the French and their devotion to their colonial empire, would probably cause long-continued resentment against the United States, which might embarrass this Government in achieving all of the objectives of its global policies.

4. Restoration Subject to No Conditions.

The French policy of commercial exclusiveness, the failure to develop representative institutions, the small use made of Indo-chinese in administration, and the failure of the French Indo-chinese Administration to resist Japanese demands, make unconditional restoration of French sovereignty over this strategic corner of Asia highly undesirable.

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A possible consideration in favor of the unconditional restoration of French administration is that if the British and the Dutch should be unwilling to make any commitments in regard to the administration of their dependencies in the Pacific and the Far East, it might appear impolitic to make discriminatory demands on France, in view of the possible unfortunate effects of such demands on United States global policies.

III. INDEPENDENCE FOR INDOCHINA

Over 17 million of the 24 million inhabitants of Indochina are Annamites. The Annamites are one of the most highly civilized peoples in southeastern Asia, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that, after a preparatory period, they would prove to be politically not less capable than the Thai, who have successfully governed Thailand for centuries, or than the Burmese who, before the war, had achieved the substance of self-government though not the title.

A nationalist movement of some proportions exists in Indochina. Although the French never favored the growth of an indigenous nationalism, the liberal principles of French political thought inevitably produced a desire for political liberty among educated native people. More particularly, the development of native political consciousness may be traced to grievances against the French rulers. Among these might be listed the contrast between the native standard of living and that of resident Europeans, discrimination in wage levels and in social and professional opportunities, the high cost of living which largely nullified the economic advantages produced by the French regime, inequality before the law, alleged abuses of its privileges by the Roman Catholic Church, unfilled promises of political liberties beyond the limited advisory councils in each colony, failure to train natives for progressive participation in administration, and the thwarted ambitions of the native intelligentsia.

However, a preparatory period for independance is necessary. At the present, the elements necessary for the early establishment of an independent Indochina are lacking. The French policy of permitting only restricted native participation in government has allowed no opportunity for the development of a trained and experienced body of natives capable of assuming full responsibility for the direction of governmental affairs. The nationalist movement has been weakened by factional strife and by lack of solid organization, and has left the great mass of the people unaffected. The antagonism of the Annamites toward the Khmers and Laotians and toward the resident Chinese also limits the possibilities of early native unity.

IV. AN INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEESHIP

There are two considerations which might appear to favor an international trusteeship for Indochina: the interests of the natives and the interests of the United States.

The failure of France to provide adequately for the welfare of the native population might justify placing Indochina under the control of an international administration, which would follow certain prescribed standards designed to develop the basis for eventual independence and for a rising standard of living among the native population.

French administration of Indochina was not directed toward developing colonial self-government, but rather toward progressive integration of the dependency into a closely knit empire dominated by the mother country. French policy, therefore, deliberately restricted the opportunity for native participation in government. The subordinated officials in Cochin-China included a much smaller proportion of natives than would be found in a British or Dutch colony. French economic policy toward Indochina was formulated primarily in terms of the interests of the mother country, not of the colony.

The interests of the United States are opposed to imperialism and favor the progressive development, economically and politically, of dependent peoples until they are prepared for and are granted independence. The peoples in the Far East have a vigorous and emotional opposition to western imperialism and this opposition appears to have increased in strength as a result of Japanese promises and propaganda during the present war. It is to the interest of the United States to dissociate itself in every feasible way from the imperialism of the European powers in the Far East. If the United States should participate in the restoration of France in Indochina, with no conditions or provisions looking to the betterment of native conditions and the development of the people toward independence, it might well weaken the traditional confidence of Eastern

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peoples in the United States. If Indochina were a problem by itself the solution would appear to be the termination of French rule of an international trusteeship.

A trusteeship might be created by the projected international organization to function within the framework of the plan for international trusteeships which has been approved by the Department. Or, two or more of the leading powers might set up a trusteeship. The trustee powers would necessarily assume, in the name of the people concerned, all rights and responsibilities of sovereignty including security for the peoples, conduct of foreign relations, financial solvency of the administration, and responsibility and power for all acts of government - executive, legislative and judicial. A detailed plan for such a trusteeship has been drafted by an interdivisional committee of the Department, entitled "Draft Outline of an International Trusteeship Government for Indochina" (CAC-114 Preliminary).

The perplexing fact, however, is that France is not the only imperialist power in the Far East. Great Britain and the Netherlands also claim the return of colonies which are now under Japanese military occupation. Each of the colonial powers should give commitments to adopt measures of colonial administration, with some degree of international responsibility, which will further the development of their dependent peoples, along the path toward autonomy or independence.

The problem for the United States is whether it will be advisable, especially in view of the effect on United States global policies, to make demands on France in regard to Indochina when similar demands are not made on Great Britian and the Netherlands in regard to their Pacific and Far Eastern colonies.

(28) RESOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INDOCHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY, AUGUST 13-15, 1945 (Extract)

Source: *Breaking Our Chains*, pp. 63-67.

From August 13 to 15, the Indochinese Communist Party held a National Conference at Tan Trao to present to cadres the leadership's analysis and plan of action for seizing power. The Resolution of the Conference pointed to contradictions between the U.S. and France and between the U.S. and China as conditions which should be exploited to the advantage of the revolution. It also warned that because of conflict between the capitalist countries and the Soviet Union, the U.S. and Britain might allow the French to return to Indochina, and concluded that only the real strength of the revolution would determine the outcome.

III. The Party's political line

1. The very favourable opportunity for the conquest of independence will come soon.

2. We are in an emergency. Our activities must be based on the following three principles:

a) Concentration - To concentrate our forces upon the essential tasks.

b) Unity - To realize unity of action and of command in the political and military field.

c) Timeliness - To act in good time and not to let slip any opportunity.

3. At present, the aim of our struggle is to win complete independence.

4. The main slogans of struggle are:

Down with the aggressors!
Complete independence!
People's power!

5. We must immediately occupy by surprise the regions where success is certain, whether they are urban centres or rural zones. People's committees must be set up where we are masters of the situation.

6. We must carry out the following ten-point Viet Minh policy:

a) To struggle against foreign aggression and suppress traitors. To build up a completely independent Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

b) To arm the people for the struggle against the Japanese, to develop the Viet Nam Liberation Army.

c) To confiscate the property of the invaders and the traitors, nationalize it or distribute it to the poor according to the case.

d) To abolish the iniquitous system of taxation established by the imperialists and set up an equitable and rational taxation system.

e) To put into practice democratic freedoms and universal suffrage. To recognize equality of nationalities and of the sexes.

f) To re-allot communal land so that the poor peasants will have land to till. To reduce land rent and interest and defer payment of loans.

g) To put into practice the eight-hour work day, promulgate laws on social security and organize social assistance.

h) To build up and develop national economy to encourage and help industry, agriculture and commerce. To found the National Bank.

i) To struggle against illiteracy. To organize compulsory primary education. To train able people for various branches of activity.

j) To maintain good relations with countries which respect the independence of Viet Nam.

7. Attitude toward foreign residents

a) Toward the Japanese: To disarm them, confiscate their property, suppress those who resist by force and intern the others and treat them well, winning over to our cause those who are relatively good and using them for propaganda work.

b) Toward the Chinese residents: To ensure protection of their lives and property. To maintain good relations with them. To hand over Chinese traitors to anti-Japanese organizations of the Chinese residents to deal with them.

c) Toward the French residents: To ensure protection of their lives and property (except for pro-Japanese elements).

d) Toward the British and Americans: To maintain good relations with them.

8. Attitude toward the various puppet governments: Pending the Party's concrete instruction, to carry out agitation work among the masses to bring them to oppose these governments. To put forth the slogans: "Overthrow the puppet government, set up the People's power!"

9. Attitude toward the Allied forces landed in Indochina:

a) Toward the Gaullist troops: Pending the Party's instructions, we must avoid all military incidents, but where they penetrate, people and their property must be evacuated; at the same time we must lead the masses to demonstrate against all attempts made by the French to re-establish their former rule in Indochina.

b) Toward the American, British and Chinese troops: Pending the Party's instructions, we should avoid collisons and maintain good relations with them.

In case they encroach upon our rights and interests, we should oppose a passive resistance by evacuating the inhabitants and their property. We should bring the masses as a whole to hold demonstrations under the slogans of complete independence for Viet Nam.

IV. Foreign policy

1. In the sphere of foreign policy, up to now and in spite of our efforts, our relations with the Chinese have not yet brought good results. Our relations with the Allies have made some progress, but the Vietnamese revolution has not as yet succeeded in winning a position on the international arena.

2. At present, in foreign policy we must fully realize the following two points:

a) We must avail ourselves of the contradictions in the Allied camp concerning the Indochina question, between the British and French on the one side, and the Americans and Chinese on the other.

b) The contradictions between Britain, the United States and France on the one side and the Soviet Union on the other, might lead the British and Americans to make concessions to the French and allow them to come back to Indochina.

3. Our policy consists in avoiding this conjuncture: to be alone in our resistance to the Allied forces (China, France, Britain and the United States) which would invade our country and force on us a French or a puppet government going counter to the aspirations of our people.

That is why we must win the Soviet Union and the United States over to our cause so that we can oppose French attempts to resume their former position in Indochina and the manoeuvres of some Chinese militarists to occupy our country.

4. However that may be, it is our own forces that will decide the success of our relations with the Allies.

5. We must set up close contact with the weak and small countries, with the Chinese and French peoples, and win their support.

The Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, 1945

All men are created equal; they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights; among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

This immortal statement was made in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.

The Declaration of the French Revolution made in 1791 on the Rights of Man and the Citizen also states: "All men are born free and with equal rights, and must always remain free and have equal rights."

Those are undeniable truths.

Nevertheless, for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow citizens. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice.

In the field of politics, they have deprived our people of every democratic liberty.

They have enforced inhuman laws; they have set up three distinct political regimes in the North, the Center, and the South of Viet-Nam in order to wreck our national unity and prevent our people from being united.

They have built more prisons than schools. They have mercilessly slain our patriots; they have drowned our uprisings in rivers of blood.

They have fettered public opinion; they have practiced obscurantism against our people.

To weaken our race they have forced us to use opium and alcohol.

In the field of economics, they have fleeced us to the backbone, impoverished our people and devastated our land.

They have robbed us of our rice fields, our mines, our forests, and our raw materials. They have monopolized the issuing of bank notes and the export trade.

They have invented numerous unjustifiable taxes and reduced our people, especially our peasantry, to a state of extreme poverty.

They have hampered the prospering of our national bourgeoisie; they have mercilessly exploited our workers.

In the autumn of 1940, when the Japanese fascists violated Indochina's territory to establish new bases in their fight against the Allies, the French imperialists went down on their bended knees and handed over our country to them.

Thus, from that date, our people were subjected to the double yoke of the French and the Japanese. Their sufferings and miseries increased. The result was that, from the end of last year to the beginning of this year, from Quang Tri Province to the North of Viet-Nam, more than two million of our fellow citizens died from starvation. On March 9 [1945], the French troops were disarmed by the Japanese. The French colonialists either fled or surrendered, showing that not only were they incapable of "protecting" us, but that, in the span of five years, they had twice sold our country to the Japanese.

On several occasions before March 9, the Viet Minh League urged the French to ally themselves with it against the Japanese. Instead of agreeing to this proposal, the French colonialists so intensified their terrorist activities against the Viet Minh members that before fleeing they massacred a great number of our political prisoners detained at Yen Bay and Cao Bang.

Notwithstanding all this, our fellow citizens have always manifested toward the French a tolerant and humane attitude. Even after the Japanese *Putsch* of March, 1945, the Viet Minh League helped many Frenchmen to cross the frontier, rescued some of them from Japanese jails, and protected French lives and property.

From the autumn of 1940, our country had in fact ceased to be a French colony and had become a Japanese possession.

After the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies, our whole people rose to regain our national sovereignty and to found the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam.

The truth is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese and not from the French.

The French have fled, the Japanese have capitulated, Emperor Bao Dai has abdicated. Our people have broken the chains which for nearly a century have fettered them and have won independence for the Fatherland. Our people at the same time have overthrown the monarchic regime that has reigned supreme for dozens of centuries. In its place has been established the present Democratic Republic.

For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government, representing the whole Vietnamese people, declare that from now on we break off all relations of a colonial character with France; we repeal all the international obligation that France has so far subscribed to on behalf of Viet-Nam, and we abolish all the special rights the French have unlawfully acquired in our Fatherland.

The whole Vietnamese people, animated by a common purpose, are determined to fight to the bitter end against any attempt by the French colonialists to reconquer their country.

We are convinced that the Allied nations, which at Teheran and San Francisco have acknowledged the principles of self-determination and equality of nations, will not refuse to acknowledge the independence of Viet-Nam.

A people who have courageously opposed French domination for more than eighty years, a people who have fought side by side with the Allies against the fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent.

For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, solemnly declare to the world that Viet-Nam has the right to be a free and independent country—and in fact it is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty.

(10) MEMORANDUM BY KENNETH P. LANDON, DIVISION OF FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, JULY 10, 1944

Source: *U.S. Vietnam Relations, Book 7, V.B.2.*, pp. 32-33.

The State Department's Southeast Asia specialist, Kenneth P. Landon, in a memorandum for the regional office, traced the background of Roosevelt's advocacy of trusteeship for Indochina and noted that the President opposed the use of French troops in the liberation of Indochina, in order to insure that trusteeship would follow.

On March 27, 1943 President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Hull, the Right Honorable Anthony Eden, British Ambassador Lord Halifax, Mr. Strang of the British Foreign Office, Ambassador Winant, Under Secretary Welles, and Mr. Harry Hopkins held a general conference at the White House. In the course of the discussion the President suggested that trusteeship be set up for Indochina. Mr. Eden indicated that he was favorably impressed with this proposal.

On January 3, 1944, Secretary of State Hull and the British Ambassador Lord Halifax held a conversation at the Department in which the British Ambassador remarked that information had come to him from his Foreign Office that in a conversation with the Turks, Egyptians and perhaps others during his recent trip to the Near East, the President spoke rather definitely about what purported to be his views to the effect that Indochina should be taken away from the French and put under an international trusteeship, etc. The Ambassador said that of course he had heard the President make remarks like this during the past year or more but that the question of whether the President's utterances represent final conclusions becomes important in view of the fact that it would soon get back to the French, etc. Mr. Hull said that he knew no more about the matter than the Ambassador and had only heard the President make these remarks occasionally just about as the Ambassador had heard him make them. He added that in his judgment, "the President and Mr. Churchill would find it desirable to talk this matter over fully deliberately and perhaps finally at some future stage."

In a memorandum for the President of January 14, Mr. Hull reported his conversation with the British Ambassador and asked if the President's opinion, previously expressed, that Indochina should be taken away from the French and administered by an international trusteeship, represented his final conclusions on the matter. The Secretary stated that he had informed the British Ambassador that he did not know whether the President had come to any final conclusion on the subject.

On February 17, 1944, in a memorandum for the President from the Under Secretary, on the subject of Civil Affairs problems in Indochina, the statement was made that "Subject to your approval, the State Department will proceed on the assumption that French armed forces will be employed to at least some extent in the military operations, and that in the administration of Indochina it will be desirable to employ French nationals who have an intimate knowledge of the country and its problems." Across the face of the document the President in reaffirmation of his previously expressed opinion, wrote: "No French help in Indochina ____ country on trusteeship."

On February 25, 1944, in a memorandum to Mr. Dunn, the Under Secretary mentioned the President's reception of the memorandum of February 17 above referred to and stated that the "President expressed the view that no French troops whatever should be used in operations there [Indochina]. He feels the operations should be Anglo-American with international trusteeship following."

(15) DRAFT MEMORANDUM BY G. H. BLAKESLEE, FAR EASTERN DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, APRIL, 1945

Source: 851G.00/4-545, State Department Central Files, National Archives.

While President Roosevelt was resisting pressures to assist the French military in positioning itself for the postwar reconquest of Indochina, bureaucrats in the State Department's Far Eastern Division were thinking in very different terms. In an annex to a draft memorandum on Indochina and the use of French military resources in Pacific operations, written prior to Roosevelt's death, the Division found Vietnamese unready for self-government and cited antagonism between the Vietnamese and the Khmers and Cambodians as another argument against independence. It recommended against placing any conditions on restoration of French rule or pressure on France to agree to trusteeship, in order to preserve good relations with a friendly state which was expected to join the U.S. in exercising world power. Although the exercise was apparently cut short by Roosevelt's death, it offers insight into State Department views of the Indochina problem at that time.

UNITED STATES POLICY WITH REGARD
TO THE FUTURE OF INDOCHINA

I. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

There are three possible solutions for the problem of the disposition of Indochina. It may be restored to France, with or without conditions; it may be granted independence; or it may be placed under an international trusteeship.

II. RESTORATION TO FRANCE

1. Considerations in favor of Restoration

a. The Global Situation

If France is to be denied her former position in Indochina she will be to that extent weakened as a world power. It will probably be necessary for the United States to take the lead in any move by which France will be denied her former position in Indochina. If the United States, especially in view of its many unequivocal statements favoring the restoration of the French overseas territories, is the spearhead for partial dismemberment of the French Empire, French resentment will be such as to impose a very serious strain upon our relations and thus tend to defeat basic elements underlying our policy towards France. A disgruntled, psychologically sick and sovereign-conscious France will not augur well for postwar collaboration in Europe and in the world as a whole.

If it is to be the active policy of the United States to seek and insist upon the adoption of measures by which the peoples of dependent areas are to be lifted from their present social condition and are to be given in time opportunity for full self-determination, we should consider whether that aim can best be accomplished in the case of Indochina through cooperation with the French or through denial of any role to France, and operate through an international trusteeship. In reaching that decision we must determine whether it is of more interest to us and the world as a whole to have a strong, friendly, cooperative France, or have a resentful France plus having on our hands a social and administrative problem of the first magnitude.

b. Commitments of the United States Government

"The policy of the Government of the United States has been based upon the maintenance of the integrity of France and of the French Empire and of the eventual restoration of the complete independence of all French territories." (Department of State Press Release of March 2, 1942 (no. 85) relative to situation in New Caledonia.)

"The Government of the United States recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of the people of France over French possessions overseas. The Government of the United States fervently hopes that it may see the reestablishment of the independence of France and of the integrity of French territory." (Acting Secretary of State in note to the French Ambassador at Washington, April 13, 1942 with respect to the establishment of a consular post at Brazzaville.)

1. To respect the Vietnamese people's right to true independence and the South Vietnamese people's right to effective self-determination; stop the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam, the bombing, mining and blockade of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam; completely cease the "Vietnamization" policy; and all U.S. military activities in South Vietnam; rapidly and completely withdraw all U.S. troops, advisors, military personnel, technical personnel, weapons and war materials and those of the other foreign countries in the U.S. camp from South Vietnam; liquidate the U.S. military bases in South Vietnam; end all U.S. military involvement in Vietnam; and stop supporting the Nguyen Van Thieu stooge administration.

2. A solution to the internal problem of South Vietnam must proceed from the actual situation that there exist in South Vietnam two administrations, two armies, and other political forces. It is necessary to achieve national concord. The sides in South Vietnam must unite on the basis of equality, mutual respect and mutual nonelimination. Democratic freedoms must be guaranteed to the people. To this end, it is necessary to form in South Vietnam a provisional government of national concord with three equal segments to take charge of the affairs in the period of transition and to organize truly free and democratic general elections.

(303) NEWS CONFERENCE BY PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS, HENRY KISSINGER, January 26, 1972 (Extract)

Source: *Department of State Bulletin*, February 14, 1972, pp. 191-194.

The Nixon Administration decided that it had more to lose than to gain by keeping the positions of the two sides in the private talks of 1971 secret. Kissinger gave a U.S. account of the substance of the secret negotiations in Paris during the previous year. He asserted that the problem in those negotiations was the DRV demand that the U.S. overthrow the existing government.

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Now, then, in June and July we went through the nine points, point by point. We followed the strategy of seeing whether we could get an agreement in principle, and then if we got an agreement in principle, our intention was, our mutual intention was, to pass the implementation into the public forum where the experts could deal with the matter on a more sustained basis than on these rather complicated and difficult secret trips to Paris.

After having gone through every point of the nine points, and those categories where the seven points were more specific than the nine points - that is to say those categories that pertain to the political future of South Viet-Nam and to its legal status - with respect to those we answered the seven points. We then tabled an eight-point proposal, and now you understand why it was eight points, on August 16.

That proposal set a date for withdrawal which was 9 months after signing an agreement, or to put it another way, we said, "We are-prepared to withdraw by August 1, 1972, provided an agreement is reached by November 1, 1971." It included specific proposals for American neutrality in the forthcoming South Vietnamese elections, and for the first time introduced a number of political principles, such as a declaration of the American willingness to limit our aid to South Viet-Nam if North Viet-Nam would agree to a limitation; and secondly, it agreed to the principle of nonalignment for South Viet-Nam as long as all the other countries of Indochina agreed to the principle of nonalignment.

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We pointed out that the publication of such principles was in itself a political fact and would in itself affect the political evolution, and we formally stated that we were prepared to have an economic reconstruction program along the lines of what had been orally discussed before.

This was turned down on September 13, essentially on two grounds: that the withdrawal date was too long and that we had been unclear about how we defined total withdrawal - that is to say, whether any forces would remain in an individual capacity - and secondly, on the ground that a simple declaration of American political neutrality while the existing government stayed in office would not overcome the advantage of the existing government in running and being in office.

We therefore reflected atout these two objections and we submitted, in early October, October 11, the proposal which you have, essentially, before you, indicating that we were prepared to implement it in stages.

In this proposal, we met the first point by indicating that we were talking about the total withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces. We shortened the deadline. We gave a precise description of how the political process might operate; that is to say, we put forward the electoral commission, and we indicated that President Thieu had agreed that he would resign prior to the election.

And we also indicated that we were prepared, once the global agreement was signed in principle, to begin implementing the withdrawal and prisoner exchange portions, even while the other elements were still being ironed out, provided that the final agreement would be reached within that 6-month period in which the withdrawals were running.

Yesterday's proposal is essentially the proposal we made October 11, to which we have never had a response. It added, as a new element, the public commitment of the United States and of the Government of South Viet-Nam, which is a crucial new element, because it is of profound significance to the political evolution of South Viet-Nam.

So this is where we are today.

Now, let me sum up what the two contentious issues are so that we can narrow the debate. There is no debate - I have watched some commentaries and read some newspapers - about the cease-fire as part of the settlement. We may well differ about how we define the cease-fire, but that is not a contentious issue.

In fact, of the nine points of the other side, seven have been more or less - I don't want to say "agreed to," but the differences have been narrowed to manageable proportions. There are two issues; one is the withdrawal, the other is the political evolution.

With respect to the withdrawal, there is an ambiguity about the word "date certain." The North Vietnamese position is that we should set a date, that we will implement it, regardless of what else happens, regardless of whether there is a prisoner exchange, regardless ofhow they negotiate their own proposal. In other words, that we should get out unilaterally.

Moreover, they define withdrawal not just as the withdrawal of American forces, but the withdrawal of all American equipment, all economic aid, all military aid, which is, in considering the fact that they receive from $800 million to $1 billion worth of aid from their allies, a prescription for a unilateral turnover.

On the political evolution, our basic principle has been a principle we have been prepared to sign together with them, that we are not committed to any one political structure or government in South Viet-Nam. Our principle has been that we want a political evolution that gives the people of South Viet-Nam a genuine opportunity to express their preferences.

We have pointed out, in innumerable meetings, that we recognize that this is a tough problem. We have indicated with extraordinary repetitiveness, as those of you who have heard me will not challenge, with extraordinary repetitiveness, that we know that Vietnamese traditions are different and that we are prepared to listen to their version of what a free political process might be like.

We have searched our souls to try to come up with a proposal that seems free to us; and after all, the agreement by the existing government - to have a commission comprising the people that wish to overthrow them run, organize, and supervise the election, to put the election under international supervision, and to resign a month before the election - is not just a trivial proposal.

The North Vietnamese position has been that they want us to agree with them, first, on replacing the existing government and, secondly on a structure in which the probability of their taking over is close to certainty.

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They want us, in other words, to do in the political field the same thing that they are asking us to do in the military field, to negotiate the terms of the turnover to them, regardless of what the people may think.

Now, the North Vietnamese had proved to be masters in ambiguity. Throughout these months while we were negotiating the nine points and they were lacerating us for not responding to the seven points, successions of Americans came back from Paris saying that they knew that if we would just make a proposal in the military field this would unlock the door. At the precise moment they had told us, with even greater repetitivenss than I am capable of, that there was no solution that did not include a political element; that there was no military proposal, as indeed they have now said publicly to the New York Times and yesterday in anticipation of what they thought might be the President's proposal last night.

They have said that they want a government composed of people who stand for peace, neutrality, and independence. There is another magic word which eludes me at the moment. And Americans cannot object to this proposal. The only thing is, they are the only ones who know who stands for peace, neutrality, and independence.

Whenever in these negotiations we have said, "All right, you don't like Thieu. How about this fellow, or that fellow, or that fellow?" there is almost no one that we know who they believe stands for peace, neutrality, and independence.

So I would like to express this to you. The issue is to us: We are prepared, in all conscience and in all seriousness, to negotiate with them immediately any scheme that any reasonable person can say leaves open the political future of South Viet-Nam to the people of South Viet-Nam, just as we are not prepared to withdraw without knowing anything at all of what is going to happen next. So we are not prepared to end this war by turning over the Government of South Viet-Nam as part of a political deal.

We are prepared to have a political process in which they can have a chance of winning, which is not loaded in any direction. We have given our views of what this political process might be. We are prepared to listen to their views of what that political process might be. And we said in both notes of last fall, notes that were not intended for publication, at a time when we were hoping to be able to step before you with an agreement, that we are prepared to listen to their points.

Now, there has been some question of, "Did they ask us to replace or overthrow" - or whatever the word is - "the existing government in South Viet-Nam?"

We have every interest in stepping before you with total honesty. They have asked two things of us:

One, an indirect overthrow of the government; that is to say, that we have to withdraw. The way they phrase it, we would have to withdraw all American equipment, even that which the South Vietnamese Army has. They have asked us to withdraw all equipment, all future military aid, all future economic aid; and the practical consequence of that proposal, while they are receiving close to $1 billion worth of foreign aid, would be the indirect overthrow of the Government of South Viet-Nam, something about which there can be no question.

But they have further asked us, and we do not want to be forced to prove it, to change the government directly, generously leaving the method to us, and, therefore, the President's statement was true and is supportable.

We have no interest in engaging in a debate with the North Vietnamese that would force any more of this record into the open. We do have an interest that the American public understand exactly what is at issue today.

So, I repeat, on the political side, the war is not continuing because we want to maintain a government. We said on July 26 and on August 16, on July 26 orally and on August 16 in writing, that we would abide by the outcome of any political process in South Viet-Nam and that they were not committed to any particular government.

We have, in the proposals of October 11 and in the proposals we shall make tomorrow, that is to say, January 27 - the proposal the President made last night - we have outlined a detailed process by which immediately upon signature of an agreement, one of the most important aspects of sovereignty, the organizing and running of elections, would be put outside the existing government, and where the existing government would resign a month before the election, and we have told the other side that we are prepared to consider other proposals.

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(304) COMMUNIQUE SUPPLEMENT ON TALKS LEADING TO BOMBING CESSATION, April 20, 1972

Source: Paris VNA in Vietnamese to VNA Hanoi April 20, 1972, translated in FBIS Asia and Pacific, April 24, 1972, pp. K-20-22.

During the 1972 Spring offensive the DRV released a statement in Paris which revealed the details of the talks which had been held in the summer and autumn of 1968 in order to arrive at an agreement on a bombing halt and the start of peace talks. The aim of the DRV account was to show that it had never agreed to any conditions on the U.S. bombing halt, but that the U.S. had, on the contrary, stated privately that the halt was "unconditional." The U.S. never challenged the specifics of the DRV account, but noted that it presented only part of the record. It omitted the unilateral "understanding" which the U.S. presented to the DRV that Communist forces would not indiscriminately attack major cities or abuse the demilitarized zone.

Parallel to the public talks from 13 May 1968, private talks were held between the DRV and the United States leading to a halt of the U.S. bombing of the DRV and to the holding of the Paris conference on Vietnam.

During the private talks from 26 June 1968 to 15 September 1968, the U.S. side wanted to discuss the "circumstances following the bombing halt," which, in reality, meant posing conditions of reciprocity for the U.S. cessation of its bombing. The DRV side resolutely demanded that the United States cease its bombing completely and unconditionally. Finally the U.S. side accepted this position of the DRV.

At the private meeting on 20 September 1968, the U.S. side no longer laid stress on "circumstances" but demanded that there be "serious talks," with the participation of the Saigon administration, to seek a political solution to the Vietnam problem before the United States would stop its bombing. To show its good will, the DRV side agreed to this and the two sides continued discussions until 30 October 1968 when they agreed on the time for the United States to stop its bombing and the time for holding the four-party conference in Paris.

Following are the main contents of these private meetings:

The U.S. viewpoint was that the United States would stop bombing the DRV. After that the two sides would bring up a number of questions which the United States called "circumstances," namely: 1) the restoration of the demilitarized zone; 2) no intensification of forces on both sides; 3) beginning of substantive talks with each side being free to raise any question that it is interested in. "Our side will have representatives of the Republic of Vietnam. Your side will have representatives invited by you;" 4) no great offensive against Saigon, Hue, and Da Nang.

The DRV side pointed out that the real nature of the U.S. proposal was that the United States would stop its bombing "conditionally" and that it was still on the basis of "reciprocity," because the United States wanted its cessation of the bombing of the DRV to be dependent on the discussion of and agreement on problems in the period following the bombing halt. The DRV side resolutely demanded that the United States completely and unconditionally cease its bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV.

At the private meeting on 12 September 1968, Mr. Le Duc Tho said: "Before engaging in discussions of problems with a view to seeking a political settlement of the Vietnam issue, you must unconditionally end the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV. After that the two sides will discuss the questions raised by them. That is our positive proposal. That is our unswerving and unchangeable stand."

Also at the private meeting on 12 September 1968, Ambassador Harriman said: "We agree with each other that in order to have better conversations, all bombings must cease. You demand an unconditional bombing halt. We recognize that." However, the U.S. side still repeated military conditions for the bombing halt, considering them "very important factors relating to the cessation of bombing."

At the private meeting on 15 September 1968, Mr. Le Duc Tho reaffirmed: "We demanded that the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV be stopped unconditionally and that there be no 'reciprocity.' You have agreed to that. After you have unconditionally ceased the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV, we will sit down and talk with each other. You will raise your questions, and we will raise ours."

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At the private meeting on 20 September 1968, after Ambassador Harriman's return from the United States, the U.S. side raised the question of the two sides' "agreement on a serious conference with the participation of the representatives of the Republic of Vietnam" after the U.S. bombing halt, considering it "an important factor for the United States to stop its bombing of North Vietnam." Ambassador Harriman said: "What is new is that my government allows me to say that the agreement on this issue could be an important factor facilitating the decision on a bombing halt."

After being questioned by the DRV side as to whether what the United States had just raised constituted the only condition and whether the U.S. bombing halt would take place only after the two sides had agreed on this issue, Ambassador Harriman answered: "We think that our government would not agree to a bombing halt if we cannot agree on this issue." He also said: "I think that this is not a condition in any form. We also note your view on the unconditional cessation of bombing."

At the private meeting on 15 October 1968, Ambassador Harriman informed the DRV side that he had received an instruction from Washington and said: "We are ready to order an end to the bombing and all other acts relating to the use of force over the entire DRV territory if you agree to begin serious talks on the day following the bombing halt and in such talks, representatives of the Republic of Vietnam Government would participate on our side. If your answer to the participation of representatives of the Republic of Vietnam Government is affirmative, we can tell you that the order to cease all bombings will be issued 1 or 2 days after that."

Minister Xuan Thuy answered: "You can report to Washington the following: After the United States has unconditionally ceased the bombing and all other acts of war against the DRV, the DRV side will agree that there will be a conference comprising four delegations, including the DRV delegation, the PRGRSV delegation, the U.S. Government delegation, and the delegation of the Saigon administration, to discuss a political solution (? to the Vietnam problem)."

After the two sides reached an agreement on that problem, the content of the following private meetings was aimed at deciding on the date of the halt of U.S. bombings, the date of the holding of the Paris conference on Vietnam, and the way to record the facts in the documents.

The DRV side reiterated its demand, that is, the United States must unconditionally end its air raids, and asked that the facts be recorded in the memorandum. The U.S. side also reiterated that the ending of the bombing by the United States was unconditional. In the private meeting held on 24 October 1968, Ambassador Harriman said: "We recognize your statement that there is no condition to the cessation of the bombing. Therefore, we assure you that in any statement of the U.S. Government, there will not be a single word relating to conditions."

However, the U.S. side did not want this recorded in the memorandum. That is why at the 21 October 1968 private meeting, Minister Xuan Thuy asked the U.S. side: "It is preferable to record the facts on paper. Otherwise, after a few days, your side could claim that the DRV has agreed with the U.S. side on these conditions, and actually we have not accepted any condition. And also, for example, the foreign correspondents may pretty soon ask us this question: You said that the Americans have unconditionally ended the bombing, but the Americans said that 'there is some condition attached.' Thus, how are we going to answer the newsmen's question?" Ambassador Harriman replied: "You should not doubt my words. We will stop bombing without any conditions."

On 30 October 1968, the DRV side told the U.S. side that it accepted the U.S. request not to record the facts in the memorandum.

At the last private meeting held on the evening of 30-31 October 1968, Ambassador Harriman told our side: "If I am correct in understanding that your side does not need a memorandum any more, then I am authorized to inform you that our President will issue orders on the beginning of the evening of 31 October, that is at about (? 7 a.m. or 8 a. m.) Washington time, to put an end to all bombings and shellings by U.S. air and naval forces and artillery, as well as to all other acts relating to the use of force against the whole of the territory of the DRV. These orders will be effective 12 hours after their issuance. The President will make a declaration on this action at the time these orders will be promulgated. Concerning this fact, it is natural that I must stress the necessity to maintain absolute secrecy until the President makes the declaration. The conference to be held according to the form already agreed upon will be convened before 6 November. We will keep in touch with you on the exact date of the conference. But the conference will not be held before Wednesday 6 November. [as received] [passage indistinct]

At this last private meeting, Minister Xuan Thuy concluded: "In the past 6 months, in the talks between the delegates of the DRV and U.S. governments, we have continued to demand that the United States totally and unconditionally end the bombings and all other acts of war against the DRV. Today, as well as the other day, your side said that the United States would stop all bombings and shellings by the U.S. air and naval forces and artillery and all other acts relating to the use of force against the whole of the territory of the DRV. We understand that there are no conditions attached, and you have asserted that there are no reciprocal conditions, and that in all the statements by the U.S. side on the ending of the bombings, there will be no mention of any condition. [passage indistinct]

Minister Xuan Thuy added: "Thus, we agree to the (? common) proposal. But I deem it necessary to clarify that, some agreements have been reached in the private meetings held in the past month, but then your side failed to comply with these agreements. From now on, we must strictly conform with the agreements concluded. We deem it necessary to remind you that we have come to Paris with good will and a correct attitude and are ready to overcome all difficulties and complications to achieve peace. Therefore your side should also display good will and a correct attitude as we do. Only under these conditions can our problems be satisfactorily solved. We are waiting for positive actions from your side."

(305) ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY NIXON, May 8, 1972 (Extract)

Source: *Background Information Relating to Southeast Asia and Vietnam*, p. 473.

At the end of March 1972, Communist forces unexpectedly struck across the Demilitarized Zone to smash a newly formed ARV division, then swiftly opened up two other fronts in the central highlands and northwest of Saigon. A nationwide offensive aimed at upsetting the balance of forces and pushing for a peace agreement on more favorable terms had begun. U.S. strategic bombing of the North resumed at a much more intense level than under the Johnson Administration, but it failed to deter the offensive. At the end of April, Communist forces overran Quang Tri and advanced on Hue, whose government disintegrated and ran in panic. A few days later, Nixon announced a strategic move which had been considered by the Johnson Administration but rejected: the mining of the port of Haiphong. He said the mining would continue until an internationally supervised ceasefire was carried out in all three countries of Indochina.

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It is plain then that what appears to be a choice among three courses of action for the United States is really no choice at all. The killing in this tragic war must stop. By simply getting out, we would only worsen the bloodshed. By relying solely on negotiations, we would give an intransigent enemy the time he needs to press his aggression on the battlefield.

There is only one way to stop the killing. That is to keep the weapons of war out of the hands of the international outlaws of North Vietnam.

. . . I therefore concluded that Hanoi must be denied the weapons and supplies it needs to continue the aggression. In full coordination with the Republic of Vietnam, I have ordered the following measures which are being implemented as I am speaking to you.

All entrances to North Vietnamese ports will be mined to prevent access to these ports and North Vietnamese naval operations from these ports. United States forces have been direct to take appropriate measures within the internal and claimed territorial waters of North Vietnam to interdict the delivery of supplies. Rail and all other communications will be cut off to the maximum extent possible. Air and naval strikes against military targets in North Vietnam will continue.

These actions are not directed against any other nation. Countries with ships presently in North Vietnamese ports have already been notified that their ships will have three daylight periods to leave in safety. After that time, the mines will become active and any ships attempting to leave or enter these ports will do so at their own risk.

These actions I have ordered will cease when the following conditions are met:

First, all American prisoners of war must be returned.

Second, there must be an internationally supervised cease-fire throughout Indochina.

Once prisoners of war are released, once the internationally supervised cease-fire has begun, we will stop all acts of force throughout Indochina, and at that time we will proceed with a complete withdrawal of all American forces from Vietnam within 4 months.

Now these terms are generous terms. They are terms which would not require surrender and humiliation on the part of anybody. They would permit the United States to withdraw with honor. They would end the killing. They would bring our POW's home. They would allow negotiations on a political settlement between the Vietnamese themselves. They would permit all the nations which have suffered in this long war - Cambodia, Laos, North Vietnam, South Vietnam - to turn at last to the urgent works of healing and of peace. They deserve immediate acceptance by North Vietnam.

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(306) NEWS CONFERENCE OF KISSINGER, May 9, 1972 (Extract)

Source: *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, May 15, 1972, pp. 843-844.

In an account of the diplomatic contacts with the DRV during the period preceding the start of the Spring offensive and the meeting in Paris on May 2 which was arranged during Kissinger's trip to Moscow in late May, the Assistant for National Security claimed that the DRV demanded the exclusion of all "organised non-Communist forces" from a coalition government prior to a ceasefire and negotiations with the Communists.

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This was the situation when I went to Moscow. As has been reported, the problem of Vietnam was discussed at considerable length. We pointed out to the Soviet leaders the extraordinary complexity that was posed for us by a massive invasion of the entire North Vietnamese field army against South Vietnam, an invasion that if it achieved its objective was bound to jeopardize the security of 60,000 Americans, and the impact that such developments had to have on our attempts to move forward on a broad front.

While I do not want to go into the details of the discussions, the Soviet leaders felt that every effort should be made to resume negotiations, and on this basis, and in order not to be hung up on a procedural point, we proposed that we would return to the plenaries, if we received a firm assurance that a private meeting would follow rapidly.

We left no doubt that we were not concerned only or primarily with the fact of a private meeting, but with the results of a private meeting. We made it very clear that we were prepared to consider any reasonable approach that would lead either to a reduction in the violence, to an end of military operations, to a discussion of the military issues alone, or to a discussion of the entire complex of issues with only one proviso: We would not impose a Communist government on Saigon; we wanted a genuine political evolution. But with that one proviso we indicated a readiness to discuss any possible approach.

The meetings took place, as you know. There were two plenary sessions and a private session. We again went through every conceivable approach for ending the military phase and we indicated a readiness to examine any political proposal other than the imposition of a Communist government.

We were confronted by the reading to us of the published Communist statement. It had taken us 6 months to set up the meeting and innumerable exchanges and when we got there, what we heard could have been clipped from a newspaper and sent to us in the mail. This was the situation we confronted last week.

What is it that the other side is asking of us that we have rejected? The other side has asked of us, prior to negotiations, prior to a cease-fire, that the following steps must be taken:

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The President of South Vietnam must resign. What is called by the other side "the machinery of oppression of the government" must be disbanded. Pacification must be stopped. Vietnamization must be stopped, which means the end of American military and economic aid. All persons that have been arrested on political grounds should be set free. Then a government should be formed which is composed of all those who favor peace, independence, neutrality, and democracy, presumably by definition, including the Communists.

In that government, in other words, the Communists would be the only organized force, since all the organized non-Communist forces would have been disbanded by definition.

All of this is prior to a cease-fire. Then this government is supposed to negotiate with the Communists a final solution. In other words, this is only the thinnest veneer; this government, which already contains the Communists, is then supposed to negotiate with the Provisional Revolutionary Government, which is backed by the North Vietnamese army. It will be the only force in the country that has any physical strength, and it is supposed to negotiate with them a final settlement. And all of this, ladies and gentlemen, is before a cease-fire.

That is what we have rejected. That is what we call the imposition, under the thinnest veneer, of a Communist government. That is the ending of American economic and military aid, the disbanding of the government that exists in South Vietnam, as a prelude to negotiations. That is the only issue on which negotiations have broken down.

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(307) NEWS CONFERENCE OF SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE DRV DELEGATION TO THE PARIS PEACE TALKS LE DUC THO, IN PARIS, May 12, 1972 (Extract)

Source: *Doan Ket* (Paris), May 31, 1972 [Translation from Vietnamese by the Editor].

Contradicting Kissinger's characterization of the DRV position in the May 2 meeting, Le Duc Tho, in his first press conference on the Paris negotiations, declared that the Saigon government could name its own representation to the proposed tripartite government, as long as it did not include Thieu, and that such a government would hold elections - not negotiate with the PRG for a settlement.

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Question: Mr. Le Duc Tho, you have many times said that you do not want to force a Communist regime on Saigon. Please clarify that point, because that is the specific point on which the negotiations have stuck.

Answer: As we have said the problem between us and the American side which is not yet resolved and which is rather tense, is the problem of the government of South Vietnam. This is one of the thorniest problems. The American desire is to maintain in South Vietnam a US lackey government in order to carry out the policy of "Vietnamizing the war," that is to achieve US neocolonialism in South Vietnam. Because they only want to maintain their lackeys, they have sacrificed unknown numbers of American lives to protect the warmongers and dictators who the Vietnamese and American people both hate.

For our part, we have said many times, - since I returned to Paris, this is the fifth time - we have declared clearly that the DRV government and the PRG of the Republic of South Vietnam have never wished to force a Communist government on South Vietnam. We only want that there be in South Vietnam a national reconciliation government having three segments, supporting peace, independence, neutrality and democracy. I can clarify for you what the three segments are: one segment belonging to the PRG RSV, one belonging to the Saigon government, and one segment belonging to patriots supporting peace, independence, neutrality and democracy - people who don't like the US, but who also may not support the PRG RSV. A government like this would reflect the real political situation in South Vietnam, and would be a resolution in accord with the situation and with logic.

Question: Can one say that no one holding the position of general in Saigon at present can participate in a tripartite government?

Answer: With regard to the three segments, the segment belonging to the Saigon government is chosen by themselves. They can choose whomever they wish in the segment reserved for them, but it can't be Thieu. The tripartite government is a national reconciliation government to achieve democratic rights of the South Vietnamese people. Therefore, whoever is in those three segments must carry out that policy.

APPENDICES

A. Readings

This section is reproduced in a format reduced in size, to conform to space restrictions necessary in using the three-ring binder design. We hope this design makes the guide easier to use throughout. We suggest enlarging the type on documents distributed to students.

Permission to reprint items in the "Fateful Decisions" curriculum guide has been granted by the following

D.C. Heath and Company, for use of selections in the public domain, compiled in *Major Problems in the History of The Vietnam War*, Robert J. McMahon, ed.

The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., for "A Generation in Search of a Future" by George Wald, c. 1969 by *The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.*

Other reproduced selections are presently in the public domain.

B. Bibliography of Items Relating to Peace and International Conflict Management.

C. List of Critical Thinking Skills

D. List of Films on Vietnam

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES FOR TEACHERS

The following references are suggested for teachers interested in exploring protest movements of the Vietnam War period and/or aspects of the ongoing debate over methods of achieving peace and striving for international justice.

1. On the protest movements of the 1960s:

   - Viorst, Milton. Fire in the Streets, America in the 1960s. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1979.
     This work is suggested because it includes both the Civil Rights and anti-war movements, is readable enough to assign sections to students, and includes an extensive and varied bibliography.

   - De Benedetti, Charles. An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era. Syracuse University Press, 1987.

2. On issues of peace and conflict management:

   - Making Peace Possible: The Promise of Economic Conversion, edited by Lloyd J. Dumas and Marek Thee. Oxford, England; New York: Pergamon Press, 1989.
     This reference is included because it deals with the economic issues involved in moving away from military production.

   - Payne, James L. Why Nations Arm. Oxford, England. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

   - Blainey, Geoffrey. The Causes of War. New York: Free Press, 1988.

   - Galtung, Johan. Solving Conflicts: A Peace Research Perspective. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Institute for Peace; distributed by University of Hawaii Press, c. 1989.
     Based on lectures presented at the University of Hawaii's Institute for Peace, addressing three major international conflicts of the 1990s using conflict resolution theory.

   - A Peace Reader: Essential Readings on War, Justice, Non-Violence, and World Order. Edited by Joseph Fahey and Richard Armstrong. New York: Paulist Press, c. 1987.

   - The Power of the People: Active Nonviolence in the United States. Edited by Robert Cooney and Helen Michalowski from an original text by Marty Jezer. Philadelphia: New Society, 1987.

   - The American Search for Peace: Moral Reasoning, Religious Hope, and National Security. Edited by George Weigel and John P. Langan, S.J. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1991.

Appendix B (continued)

- Walzer, Michael. Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

The references on issues of peace and conflict management have been excerpted from Bibliography on Peace, Security and International Conflict Management, United States Institute of Peace, 1993. Copies of the bibliography are available free of charge upon request to United Institute of Peace, 1550 M Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708.

Further information on peace studies and references to printed material are available from The Council on Peace Research in History, Institute for Human Studies, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA 22032.

SOURCES OF CLASSROOM SPEAKERS

Women for a Non-Nuclear Future Education Fund has developed a list of speakers on the Vietnam War period and on more general issues of peace. Although the availability of any particular individual is uncertain at a given time, interested teachers may request a speaker by telephoning Natalie Robinson at 861-2971.

Speakers are often available through the Vietnam Veterans Associations.

APPENDIX C

Critical Thinking Skills

Introduction

As students work through the critical thinking decision-making process, they may want to keep the following in mind:

1. The relationship between national self interest and personal self-concept.
2. The relationships between groups (e.g., racial ethnic, social).
3. Interpersonal relationships.
4. Political and legal relationships.
5. Economic relationships.
6. Historical perspective.
7. Physical environment and strategic importance.
8. Technological advantages and disadvantages - what does this mean?

Strategies that may be employed to solve problems and review alternatives:

1. Asking questions.
2. Brainstorming.
3. Committee work.
4. Discussion - playing devil's advocate.
5. Dramatizations.
6. Problem solving.
7. Role playing.
8. Simulation.
9. Debates.
10. Displays and demonstrations.
11. Speeches.
12. Panel discussions.

Critical thinking skills that should be employed:

1. Students should learn not to accept every decision and rationale at face value, but should instead question its validity.
2. Students should learn to search out all available evidence and alternatives before making the above determination.
3. They should consider:
   - The difference between verifiable facts and value claims;
   - The reliability of a source;
   - The factual evidence of a statement.
4. - They should be able to:
   - Distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant;
   - Detect bias;
   - Identify underlying assumptions;
   - Recognize fallacies and inconsistencies;
   - Determine the strength of an argument.

(Adapted from Beyer, Barry. "Critical Thinking: What is It?" Social Education. 49(4): p. 270-76.)

CRITICAL THINKING ORGANIZATIONS

The Center for Critical Thinking

The Center conducts advanced research and disseminates information on critical thinking and moral critique. It has been working closely with the Foundation for Critical Thinking, the California State Department of Education, the College Board, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Education Association, the U.S. Department of Education, and numerous school districts to facilitate implementation of high standards of critical thinking instruction from kindergarten through college. Its major works include the International Conference on Critical Thinking and the Staff Development Series. 707/662-2940.

The Foundation for Critical Thinking

The Foundation for Critical Thinking is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. It works cooperatively with the Center for Critical Thinking and Moral Critique, PBS Adult Learning Satellite Service, the College Board, and other research centers, institutes, and public institutions to publish and disseminate a variety of critical thinking resources.

Address: 4655 Sonoma Mountain Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
707/546-4926

The International Center for the Assessment of Higher Order Thinking

The Center works to establish cooperative ventures with centers for critical thinking in the U.S. and abroad, as well as with the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, the College Board, Educational Testing Services, National Assessment of Education Progress, the Office for Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education, and other relevant educational assessment institutions concerned with the assessment of higher order thinking. The International Center for the Assessment of Thinking is legally and financially a part of the Foundation for Critical Thinking. 707/664-4082.

The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking

The goal of NCECT is to become an independent, nonprofit, professional organization parallel to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, English, and other specific associations such as the American Psychological Association and the American Philosophical Association. At present, the NCECT is legally and financially a part of the Foundation for Critical Thinking and shall remain so until it is able to function independently. The Council is not, at present, specifically endorsing any workshop or program. 707/546-0629.

APPENDIX D

Films on Vietnam and the Vietnam War

The films listed below can readily be obtained from video rental outlets or college media libraries.

A Face of War	Documentary
A Rumor of War	Memoir
Agent Orange: A Story of Dignity and Doubt	Documentary
America Talks to Itself	Documentary
America's Disrupted Lives	Documentary
America's Final Hours in Vietnam	Documentary
Apocalypse Now	Hollywood
Battle - The Contact Ambush	Documentary
Born on the Fourth of July	Memoir
Boys in Company C	Memoir
Casualty of War	Memoir
Chopper Wars	Hollywood
Combat Nam	Documentary
Distant Thunder	Documentary
Eagle Eye Bravo - Another Day of War	Documentary
Ecocide: A Strategy of War	Documentary
In Love and War	Memoir
My Father, My Son	Memoir
Green Eyes	Fictional
China Beach - Vets	Memoir
China Beach - Souveniors	Memoirs
84 Charlie Mopic	Hollywood
Eye of the Dragon - Vietnamese Junk Navy	Documentary
F-4 Phantom III	Documentary
First Blood	Hollywood
Vietnam: The Secret Agent	Documentary
Vietnam: Time of the Locust	Documentary
Full Metal Jacket	Hollywood
Gardens of Stone	Hollywood
The Ten Thousand Day War (series)	Documentary
Going Back: A Return to Vietnam	Documentary
Good Morning Vietnam	Hollywood
Go Tell the Spartans	Hollywood
Hamburger Hell	Hollywood
Hanoi Hilton	Hollywood
Hearts and Minds	Hollywood
I am a Soldier	Documentary
Interview with a Disabled Viet and a Waiting Wife	Documentary
Interviews with My Lai Veterans	Documentary
Jackknife	Hollywood
Know Your Enemy - The Viet Cong	Documentary
Letters Home from Vietnam	Documentary
Marines - 65	Documentary
Medal of Honor Rag	Documentary
Navy Advisor in Vietnam - The River Force	Documentary
New Thunder for the USAF	Documentary
On Target	Documentary
Operation Name	Hollywood

Appendix D (continued)

Peace Fund	Documentary
Platoon	Memoir
Platoon Leader	Hollywood
Purple Hearts	Hollywood
Screaming Eagles in Vietnam	Documentary
Search and Destroy	Hollywood
Southeast Asia Report	Hollywood
Soviet People are with Vietnam (Soviet film)	Documentary
Survival and Evasion in Southeast Asia	Documentary
The Anderson Platoon	Documentary
The Deerhunter	Hollywood
The Green Berets	Hollywood
The MIG Killers	Hollywood
The Wing	Documentary
Tornado	Hollywood
Tribes	Hollywood
Uncommon Valor	Hollywood
BAT - 29	Memoir
U.S. Navy Seals: Vietnam	Documentary
Vietnam - A Television History (PBS, Parts 1-26)	Documentary
Vietnam: An American Journey	Documentary
Vietnam: An Historical Documents, Parts 1 and 2	Documentary
Vietnam: Battle of Khe Sanh	Documentary
Vietnam: (Produced by CBS)	Documentary
Vietnam: Chronicle of a War	Documentary
Vietnam Epilogue	Documentary
Vietnam: Five Years After the War	Documentary
Vietnam Frontline Platoon	Documentary
Love, Honor and a War Called Vietnam	Documentary
Vietnam Heroes	Documentary
Vietnam: Images of War	Documentary
Vietnam: In the Year of the Pig	Documentary
Vietnam - Journal of a War (BBC)	Documentary
Vietnam: Newsreel Review 1967	Documentary
Vietnam Phantom of the Sky	Documentary
Vietnam: Remember	Documentary
Vietnam Report	Documentary
Vietnam Requiem	Documentary
Vietnam Revisited	Documentary
Vietnam: River Rats	Documentary
Vietnam: The Bombing	Documentary
Vietnam - The Green Berets	Documentary